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HD WIDENER



HW ILLI +

A detailed line drawing of a bog landscape, showing various plants, reeds, and a body of water in the foreground.

BOG-LAND



STUDIES

J. Barlow

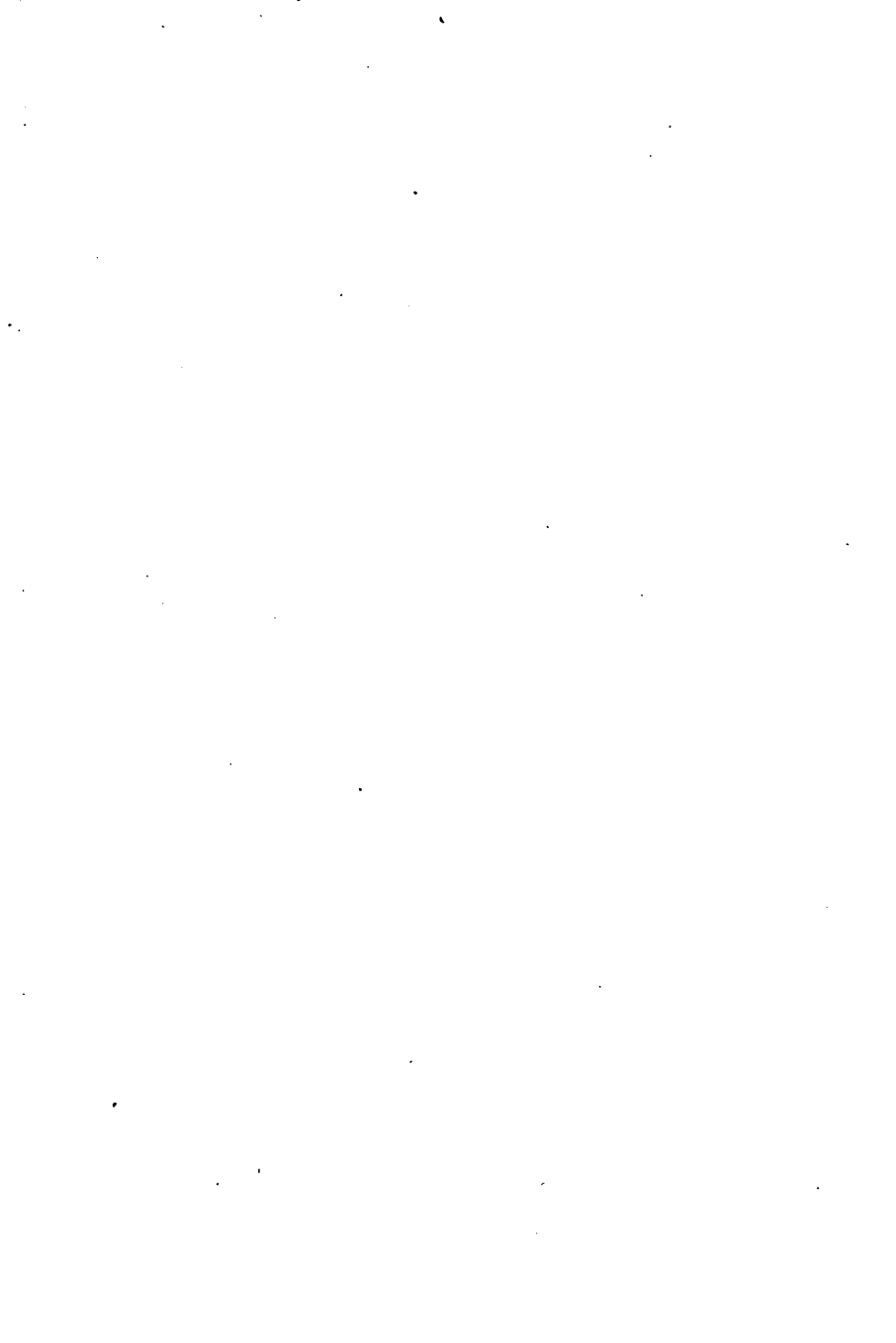
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BOG-LAND STUDIES.



J. F. Tisdall

1892

BOG-LAND

STUDIES

BY

J. BARLOW

London

T. FISHER UNWIN

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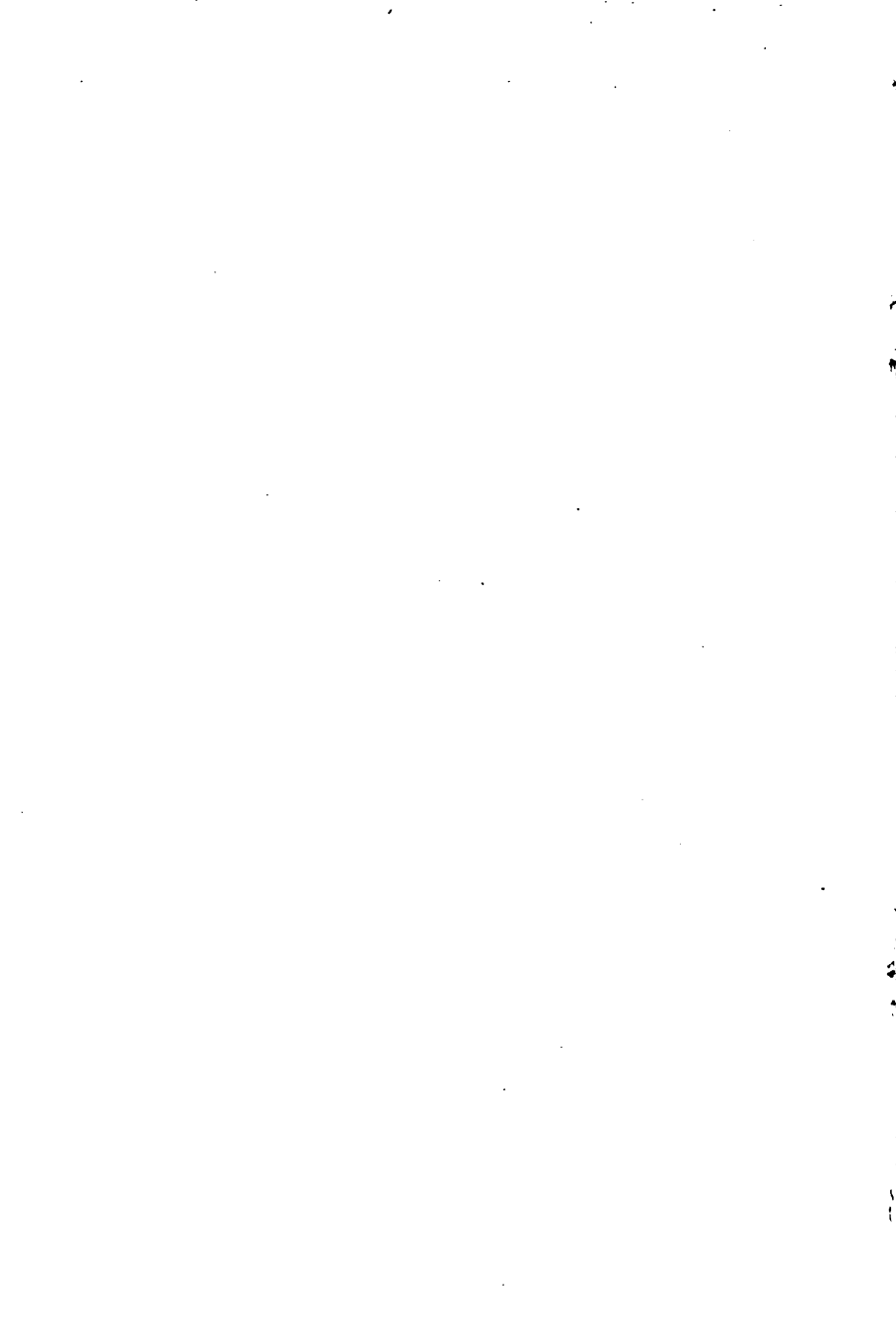
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TH' OULD MASTER.

Πῶ δ' ἐθέλεις ἵέναι πολλὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαν
Μοῦνος ἑὼν ἀγαπητός ;



TH' OULD MASTER.

I.

IT mayn't be so much av a place whin ye reckon by land—
Inish Fay—
Just a thrifle o' fields and a bog like ; but if ye considher the
say,
Sure we've lashins an' lavins o' that, spreadin' out and away
like a floor
To Ratheen at the end av our bay, that's as far as ye'll look
from yer door,
An' that far ye'd scarce look in a week to the west, where there
isn't, I'm tould,
One dhry step 'twixt yer fut an' the States ; sartin 'tis the long
waves do come rowled
Same as if they'd set out from the back o' beyant an' was
thryin' how each
Could swell up to the sizeablest bigness afore it lapt o'er on the
beach.
Ay, we've plinty enough o' the say, an' good luck to't ; I don't
understand
How the folk keep continted at all that be settled far up on the
land,
Out o' reach o' the tides ; 'tis like livin' wid niver a chance to
be spied,
And what use is one's life widout chances ? Ye've always a
chance wid the tide ;


For ye niver can tell what 'twill take in its head to sthrew round
on the shore ;
Maybe dhrift-wood, or grand bits o' boards, that comes handy
for splicin' an oar ;
Or a crab skytin' back o'er the shine o' the wet—sure, whatever
ye've found,
t's a sort o' divarsion thim whiles when ye're starvin' an'
sthreelin' around.

II.

I'd be noways denyin' the say's done ill turns on us now and
agin ;
But our bit av an Inish, begorrah, I'll stan' by thro' thick an'
thro' thin,
For the plisant ould times we've had on it is more than I'll iver
forget,
And except for th' ould master's misfortins, belike we'd be havin'
thim yet.
There was none lived continteder ; he in the Big House that's
screened from the wind
Up the hollow, an' ourselves by the shore wid the bank lanin
over behind,
An' the say washin' up to the doors, an' the sod runnin' down
to our boats,
Where along o' the weed-dhrifts an' shells there'd be grazin'
most whiles for the goats ;
And our pratie-dhrills yonder—ochone, not the heart-scalds
they've been to us since,
For it's bare-fut th' ould master'd ha' walked ere he'd ask for
a poor body's pince,
If so happen—an' ready enough 'tis to happen—a bad saison
came.
He was *that* sort, and young Mither Denis, God rest av his
sowl, was the same.

III.

Yet 'twas just be the raison av him, Misther Denis, the
trouble began.
For afore ye'd belave he shot up from a slip av a boy to a
man ;
Not his match in the counthry, sez we ; an' th' ould master he
thought that the lad
Bet creation, because, ye percaive, it was all o' the childher he
had,
An' the misthress had died on thim both. So 'twas rael bad
luck to befall
When young master tuk into his head to be off and away from
us all,
An' to make av his fortin in 'Sthralia. Och, sure he'd one made
fit an' fine,
But some money they owned, I've heard said, had got all
swallied up in a mine,
An' that gave him the notion ; an' thin there's the world young
chaps fancy to see.
So th' ould master was fairly disthracted, an' couldn't abide the
idee.
And he done all he could to purvint av his goin' an' coax him
to stay,
For he got him the natest half-decker that iver was sailed in
our bay,
An' for huntin' a mare that 'ud frighten the Saints wid the leps
that she'd lep,
A grand baste—but no ha'porth o' use ; Misther Denis he
wouldn't be kep',
An' the sorra a thing good or bad 'ud persuade him to bide here
contint,
For he'd clane set his heart upon goin'. An' so one fine morn-
in' he wint.



IV.

And we missed him, faith, little an' big, but th' ould master
he missed him the worst,
It's a full ten year oulder he looked from that day. Howsome-
diver, at first
We thried puttin' the best face we could on the matter, an'
talkin' a dale
Av how soon he'd be wid us agin ; an' thin letters 'ud come by
the mail
Wid discripshins av all Misther Denis was seein' an' doin' out
there,
An' that cheered him up finely ; an' whiles he'd step down where
the most av us were,
When we'd sit on the pier afther work, an' 'ud read us out bits
av his news
From Owsthraly ; an' thin we'd get gabbin' together like say-
gulls an' mews
Whin they're fishin' an' fightin', av all Misther Denis 'ud do
out av han'
Onst he come home as rich as a Jew ; the good stock that he'd
putt on the lan',
An' the fields he'd be dhrainin' ; bedad, we'd the whole av it
settled an' planned,
To the names o' the cows, an' which side o' the yard the new
cart-shed 'ud stand.
Why, one night young Pat Byrne an' Joe Murphy they set to
an' boxed up an' down
About which o' thim both'd get the job to look afther the grey-
hounds he'd own—
For we knew Misther Denis 'd be sartin to keep an odd few in
the place—
An' th' ould master seemed rael diverted, an' gave thim a
shillin' apaiice.

v.

But thin, it was maybe a couple o' twelvemonths from whin
he set out,
We began to misdoubt some bad luck, till at last we done worse
than misdoubt,
For the throuble crep' closer each day ; so I've watched a fog
dhrift up the shore
Wipin' out one by one ivery field glintin' green in the sun just
before.
An' to my mind that throuble's the worst, whin the time keeps
jog-throttin' along,
An' because nothin' happens at all, ye get sartiner somethin's
gone wrong.
For if grief's to befall ye, I'd liefer 'twould lape on ye suddint
when laste
Ye expect, an' grip hould o' yer heart like some nathural sort
o' wild baste,
Than come slitherin' by like a snake, an' be prickin' yer fut
wid its sting
That 'ill send the death crawlin' in could thro' yer limbs. But
'twas just such a thing
Wid the young master's letters. For first time one missed, all
we said was the post
Had delayed it belike ; an' next mail-day we said one might
aisy be lost
Comin' that far ; an' time an' agin we'd be sayin' : "Och, musha,
if aught
Would ha' happint him, some one'd ha' wrote fast enough wid
the news" ; but we thought
It was quare. Till at last we were dhruv to belaive that he'd
surely been tuk
Wid some fever, or met wid a hurt, and he thravellin' far off,
be bad luck,

And had died all alone, wid the sorra a friend to be sendin' home
word ;
Or what else was the raison that year after year tale nor tidings
we heard ?

VI.

But it come cruel hard on th' ould master, for, livin' so lone-
some an' quite,
He'd got naught to be takin' his mind off the throuble by day
or by night.
An' he wouldn't let on he thought bad o' the matter ; an' yet all
the same,
He'd be off wid himself in the boat to the town ivery mornin'
that came,
Like enough wid no chance in the world o' the mail bein' in, as
he knew ;
But he'd set Widdy Doyle at the office a-sortin' the letter-bags
thro',
An' stan' watchin' as if one 'ud make all the differ 'twixt Heaven
and Hell
An' it niver was Heaven ; for always there'd be the same story
to tell :
"No, there's nought for yer Honor this day." An' he stopped
himself goin' at last,
And 'ud send the boys over, but, och, ere ye'd think they'd ha'
fairly got past
Inish Greine, half ways back, he'd be thrampin' the pier lookin'
out for the boat,
In a down-pour, mayhap, wid the win' fit to blusther the nap
off his coat ;
An' 'twas : "Nary a thing for yer Honor."—Ochone, ivery sowl
in the place
Would be heart-vexed to see him creep home by himself wid
that news in his face.

VII.

Sure, 'tis waitin' an' hopin' that keep ye torminted. It's aisy to say :

"Och, I'll putt the thoughts out o' me head ; I'll not hope it no more from this day ;"

But next minyit, the same as a spark that ye think ye've throd under yer heel,

It flares up, an' flares out, an', begorrah, it laves you a desolit feel.

I remimber one day we made sure there was news, for the boat we espied

Wid the boys rowin' mad, fit to reave the ould thole pins clare out av her side,

An' Long Mick, the big fool, lettin' bawls in the bows, and a-wavin' the bag,

'Cause a velopy'd come wid a sthrange-coloured stamp, an' they'd settled to brag

'Twas from 'Sthralia. An', there, when th' ould master had tore it wid his hands all a-shake,

It was merely some blathers in print o' the fortins a body could make

On the railroads in France ; an' that mornin' there wasn't a word av abuse

That we didn't be givin' the omadhaun Mick—but, sure, where was the use ?

So the years slipt away an' away, an' no news to be had good or ill ;

But it's more than the years, I'll go bail, did be dhrivin' th'ould master down-hill ;

'Twas the wond'rin', an' wishin', an' frettin' that whitened the hair on his head,

When 'twas black as a crow, an' that stooped him, when sthraight as a souldier he'd tread.

VIII.

An' the last time he iver come down on the beach was a
 dhrary wild day
 In the could heart o' March, whin the win' keeps a keen like a
 dog gone asthray,
 An' the sun 'ill let on to be shinin' wid no taste av heat in it yet,
 An' the world seems swep' empty an' waitin' for somethin' it
 niver 'ill get.
 So th' ould master come mopin' along where me boat was heeled
 up on the sands,
 An' sat down wid his hands on the top av his stick, an' his chin
 on his hands ;
 Och, it's feeble, an' fretted, an' lonesome he looked as he stared
 o'er the gleam
 O' the say ; an' sez he to me : " Connor, I'm thinkin' th' ould
 Inish 'ill seem
 Quare enough whin there's ne'er an O'Neil on't, an' we after
 ownin' it all
 For these hundrids o' years." An' : " Yer Honor," sez I, " that's
 not like to befall
 In these hundrids o' years comin' by." But sez he wid a shake
 av his head :
 " Troth, 'twill happen as soon as I quit ; for since he—they've
 no hope but he's dead—
 To the sorra an O'Neil Inish Fay's bound to go ; 'tis me uncle's
 son's son,
 That lives over the wather. He'd plinty, he'd plinty—an' I'd
 but the one.
 Little news I've e'er heard o' thim all, an' that little no good.
 I misdoubt
 He'll be playin' the Devil's game here, an' be turnin' me poor
 pable out :
 Sure ye'll mind Mither Denis 'd ha' ne'er thried that trade?
 He *would* go, man, would go—

But in troth it's hard lines on yez all." An' sez I to meself:
 "It is so;
 It's hard lines ne'er to know from one day to the other who'll be
 ownin' ye next,
 Whether folks that be kind-like an' wait, or a grabbin' ould
 naygur that's vext
 Till he's got the thatch burnt o'er yer head, an' the walls
 battered down round yer hearth;
 'Tis the same as if God an' the Divil tuk turns to be ownin' the
 earth;"

So thinks I to meself. But, och musha, who'd go to be sayin'
 a word
 Might disthress the poor master thim times? And sez I: "Wid
 the help o' the Lord,
 Div'l a sowl save yer Honor's own self 'll get the chance to be
 thratin' us hard
 For this great while. An' happen yer Honor'd step round now
 by Gallaher's yard,
 For his pigs is a sight to behould." An' sez he: "Well, to-
 morrow I might—
 But to-day—it's 'most time I turned home." The Saints shield
 him, 'twas clare as the light
 That he hadn't the heart to be carin' for aught 'neath the sun,
 here or there.
 An' he off wid him home to his big empty house; an' to-morrow
 came ne'er.

IX.

Howsomediver, afore very long, oft enough one 'ud say to
 oneself
 'Twas belike better luck afther all that th' ould master was laid
 on the shelf,
 Than to have him about and around gettin' plagued wid the
 quareness o' things;

For the saisons that come bet the worst av all the wet summers
an' springs
In the lenth o' me life. Och bad cess to the could an' the snow
an' the win',
Wid the storms an' the mists an' the polthogues o' rain the week
out an' week in,
An' the oats bet to bruss wid the hail, an' the bastes starved or
dyin' outright,
Until afther the thundher in June, all the praties were sthruck
wid the blight,
As ye couldn't misdoubt if ye wint thro' the fields. But th' ould
master, ye see,
Keepin' close in the house all that while, 'cause he said he'd the
gout in his knee—
Tho' 'twas liker the grief at his heart—he'd no notion what ruin
was in't ;
An' so, liefer than have him annoyed, it's the greatest ould lies
we'd invint.
For we tould him the harvest and all was as fine as a farmer
could wish ;
An' o' times when the most we could do was to sort him a size-
able dish
O' sound praties to sarve wid his dinner, we'd say that but
seldom afore
Such a crop had been dug on the Inish ; an', sartin, that lie was
no more
Than the truth ; for 'twas worse than the worst. But one
mornin' he tuk to declare
He was sure that the blight was about, for he'd noticed the scint
on the air ;
An' we thought he'd find out on us thin ; but we swore it was
merely a heap
Av haulms rottin' ; and afther that day we'd the sinse to be
careful an' keep

A big bonfire o' rubbish alight, if the win' was that way, close at
hand,
So he'd smell on'y smoke ; an', the praise be to goodness, we
chated him grand.
And ourselves did be boilin' the weed, off the rocks, that's the
quare ugly thrash,
All the boilin' in wather an' fire'll make no more than a bitter
bad brash ;
Just to keep o' the sowl in yer body, where ivery one keeps it
that can,
Tho' 't might aisy lodge better outside, if we knew but the lie o'
the lan'.

Thin the summer dhreeped off into autumn, the same as a
soaked sod o' turf
Smoulders black ere it flickers a flame ; an' the storms came
wid say-waves an' surf
Ragin' wild up the beach ; an' the nights long an' dark, an' the
days cold and dhrear,
An' we thinkin' besides that th' ould master 'ud scarcely last out
the ould year.
Och, I niver remimbered whin things on the Inish seemed
lookin' so black,
For 'twas hayjus the winter 'ud be, wid a cruel hungry spring at
its back.

X.

But far on in the last av October, the news that come suddint
one morn
Nearly dhruv'us deminted wid joy ; 'twas too good to be true
we'd ha' sworn,
On'y somehow the Divil himself scarce seemed divil enough to
go plot
Such a thrick on th' ould master as that ; if he would, he desarves
all he's got.

'Twas a letter, no less, from young master himself, wrote the
next day but one
From where else on the earth save ould Dublin, in reach 'twixt
two shines o' the sun ;
And ourselves had made sure we might thavel the world, an'
find on'y his grave
At its farthest—'twas grand. An' the letter explained how he'd
tuk to belave
That th' ould master was gone. For some folk comin' sthraight
from this counthry, they said,
Havin' hould o' the story's wrong ind, that O'Neil o' the Inish
was dead—
Inish Fay—no mistake could be in it at all at all—ivery one
knew.
An' thin poor Misther Denis got disprit, not doubtin' the
trouble was true ;
For it happint the sweetheart he had wint an' died on him too,
an' he thought
All his life was disthroyed, an' the rest just a rubbish that
mattered for nought.
So he joined wid a party explorin' some big lonely hills after
gould,
An' they sted there I dunno how long, till the fortins they made
was untould ;
But whin onst he got back among pable, by chance the first
thing he heard tell
Was how folks home from Connaught were sayin' his father was
livin' an' well.
An' wid that he slipt into a boat that by luck was just puttin' to
say,
Niver waitin' to write by the wires. An' belike he'd be here
the next day.

XI.

While's I've seen a big elm-tree the storm's afther blowin'
clane out o' the ground,
That lay stark where it fell all the long winter thro', till the
spring-time came round,
An' the twigs on its boughs in the grass did be greenin' wid leaf-
buds an' shoots
Same as if they were wavin' above ; but one knew it was up by
the roots,
An' the life dyin' out av it. That's what I thought on whiniver
I seen
How th' ould master cheered up wid the news. He that
wouldn't ha' cared a thraneen
If they'd tould him his best cow was dead, or say-wather had
boiled wid his tay,
He was askin' for this an' for that, an' discoorsin' and orderin'
away ;
An' remimb'rin' whate'er Misther Denis was plased wid in th'
ould times long sin' :
“ Lest he'll find things amiss here to-morrow,” sez he, “ whin we
have him agin.”
Yet he scarce cou'd set one fut 'fore t'other, tho' for plisure he
couldn't keep quite ;
An' we thought, sure, young master'd find more gone amiss
than he'd aisy set right.
But the first thing th' ould master'd go do, was to send the
boys over beyant
Wid a boat-load av orders for aught he could think Misther
Denis might want—
Ale, an' baccy, an' cheese, an' the round little cakes that he
liked wid his wine,
And a rug for his room that the rats had ate up into ravel's o'
twine ;

And a couple o' chairs, 'cause the rest had got burnt by some
manner o' manes
When the girls would be short o' dhry sticks for the fires ; an'
some glass for the panes
That was out av his winder since iver the cord had gave way
wid a smash ;
And his tongs had been broke in two halves, so they used it for
proppin' the sash—
And I dunno what else all besides. But before we expected
thim home,
They were roarin' like bulls up the beach wid the news Misther
Denis was come.
For who else but himself had they met on the quays, safe an'
sound, on'y grown
Somethin' oulder ; white sthrakes in his hair—"Och," we sez,
"let that story alone :
Where'd the lad get white hairs on his head?"—And he'd bid
thim be rowin' back sthaight,
And himself 'ud be over and afther thim soon, for he had but
to wait
Till his thraps were on board. There was news ! Howsome'er
we agreed 'twould be best
To tell nought for awhile to th' ould master, who'd gone to his
room for a rest,
Or he'd likely enough get his death standin' round in the could
out o' doors ;
So we settled to call him whenever we heard the first crake o'
the oars.

XII.

Just a still misty day wid no shadow or shine was that same
Holy Eve ;
Not a breath on the smooth o' the say, on'y now an' agin a soft
heave

Swellin' up here an' there, as ye'll see in a sheet spread to blai^{ch}
by the hedge,
That keeps risin' an' fallin' as oft as a breeze creeps in under
the edge.
Yet, as still as it was, we well knew that thim heaves were a
sure sign o' win'
On its way ; an' we all were a-wishin' the boat 'ud make haste
an' come in ;
But we watched an' we wished till nigh sunset, an' nary the
sound av a pull,
Till at last, dhrifted in from the west, came the fog like a fleece
o' sheep's wool
Sthreeled down low on the wather, an' hidin' away whatsoiver
it passed
In its sthreeelin' ; and all av a minyit, out somewhere behind it,
a blast
Lep' up howlin' an' rushin' an' flustherin' thro' it, an' dhrivin' it
on,
Till afore we knew rightly 'twas comin', it's iverythin' else
seemed clane gone.
For yer eyes was 'most blinded wid spray, an' the win' deaved
yer ears wid its roar,
Not a step could ye look past the foam that seethed white to
yer fut on the shore ;
Sure ye couldn't ha' tould but the Inish was left in the wide
world alone,
Just set down be itself in the midst av a mist and a great dhrary
moan.

XIII.

An' the thought av us aich was the boat ; och, howiver'd she
stand it at all,
If she'd started an hour or two back, an' been caught in the
thick o' that squall ?

Sure it's lost she was, barrin' by luck it so chanced she'd run
under the lee
O Point Bertragh or Inish Lonane ; an' 'twas liker the crathurs
'ud be
Crossin' yonder the open, wid niver a shelter, but waves far an'
wide
Rowlin' one on the other till ye'd seem at the fut av a mad
mountain-side.
An' the best we could hope was they'd seen that the weather'd
be turnin' out quare,
An' might, happen, ha' settled they wouldn't come over, but bide
where they were.
Yet, begorrah ! 'twould be the quare weather entirely, as some
av us said,
That 'ud put Misther Denis off aught that he'd fairly tuk into
his head.
Thin Tim Duigan sez : " Arrah, lads, whisht ! afther sailin'
thro' oceans o' say,
Don't tell *me* he's naught better to do than get dhrowned in our
dhrup av a bay."
An' the words were scarce out av his mouth, whin hard by, thro'
a dhrift o' the haze,
The ould boat we beheld sthrivin' on in the storm—och the yell
we did raise !
An' it's little we yelled for, bedad ! for, next instant, there under
our eyes,
Not a couple o' perch from the pier-end, th' ould baste she must
take an' capsize.

XIV.

Och ! small blame to thim all if we'd niver seen sight av a
one o' thim more,
Wid the waves thumpin' thuds where they fell, like the butt-ends
o' beams on a door ;

An' the black hollows whirlin' between, an' the dhrift flyin' over
 thim thick,
 'S if the Divil had melted down Hell, an' was stirrin' it up wid
 a stick.
 But it happint the wave that they met wid was flounderin'
 sthraight to the strand,
 An' just swep' thim up nate on its way, till it set thim down
 safe where the sand
 Isn't wet twice a twelvemonth, no hurt on thim all, on'y dhrippin'
 an' dazed.
 And one come to his feet nigh me door, where that mornin' me
 heifer had grazed.
 An', bedad ! 'twas himself, Misther Denis, stood blinkin' an'
 shakin' the wet
 From his hair : " Hullo, Connor ! " sez he, " is it you, man ? "
 He'd niver forget
 One he'd known. But I'd hardly got hould av his hand, an' was
 wishin' him joy,
 Whin, worse luck, he looked round an' he spied Widdy
 Sullivan's imp av a boy,
 That a wave had tuk off av his feet, an' was floatin' away from
 the beach,
 And he screechin' an' sthretchin' his arms to be saved, but no
 help was in reach.
 An' as soon as the young master he seen it, he caught his hand
 out o' me own :
 " Now, stand clare, man," sez he, " would ye have me be lavin'
 the lad there to dhrown ? "
 An' wid that he throd knee-deep in foam-swirls. Ochone ! but
 he gave us the slip,
 Runnin' sheer down the black throat o' Death, an' he just afther
 'scapin' its grip.
 For the wild says come flappin' an' boomin' an' smotherin' o'er
 him, an' back

In the lap o' their ragin' they swep' him as light as a wisp o'
brown wrack.
An' they poundin' the rocks like sledge-hammers, an' clatterin'
the shingle like chains ;
Ne'er the live sowl they'd quit from their hould till they'd choked
him or bet out his brains,
Sure an' sartin. And in swung a wave wid its welthers o' wather
that lept
Wid the roar av a lion as it come, an' hissed low like a snake as
it crept
To its edge, where it tossed thim, the both o' thim. Och ! an'
the little spalpeen
Misther Denis had gript be the collar, he jumped up the first
thing we seen,
While young master lay still—not a stir—he was stunned wid a
crack on the head—
Just a flutter o' life at his heart—but it's kilt he was, kilt on us
dead.

XV.

An' so that was the ind av it all. An' the sorrowful ind tubbe
sure,
Whin our luck was turned back into throuble no power in
creation could cure.
There he lay, 'twixt the sod an' the foam, wid the spray flingin'
sparkles in the sun,
For the storm had throoped off in a hurry, contint wid what
mischief was done,
An' the last o' the day in the west from a chink o' clare gould
on the rim
Sent low rays slantin' red o'er the fall o' the say to the white
face av him
That was still as the image asleep o' the lad we'd remimbered
so long ;

Niver oulder a day in those years. An' ourselves standin' round
in a throng
Kep' a clack like the gulls overhead that were flickerin' the light
wid their wings,
And as much wit in one as the other. Och ! sure there's no
grief but it brings
Friends to thravel its road. For while yet we were feelin' his
hands stiffnin' could,
An' were sayin' the fine winsome lad, an' the heart-break it was
to behould,
Comes ould Peggy, the housekeeper, throttin' to say that th'
ould master had woke,
And had sint her to thry was there news. News? It seemed
like the Divil's own joke.
An' what ailed him to wake? He'd a right to ha' slep', wid
that news at his door,
Till the world's ind. "Is't news ye'd be afther?" sez Mick.
"Ay, there's news here galore ;
But it's news that I wouldn't be tellin' while e'er I've a tongue
in me head ;
I'd as lief stick a knife in his heart, an' he lyin' asleep on his
bed."
An' sez Gallaher : " Musha, what need to be tellin' him yet ?
Better send
For his Riverence beyant that consowls ye whin throuble's past
hopin' to mend.
An' till thin there might some one step up an' let on nothing 'd
happint below,
To contint him." An' we all thought the same, an' yet no one
was wishful to go ;
For we feared he might somehow get hould o' the truth.
Then me brother, sez he :
" Sure here's Pat, it's colloquin' a dale wid th' ould master he
is"—manin' me—

" He's the man to be sendin' ; forby he'll tell lies be the dozen
as fast
As a dog throts, will Pat." So they talked till they had me
persuaded at last ;
And I thraped off up to the House. God forgive me, each step
that I wint,
I was schamin' the quarest onthruths I could throuble me mind
to invint.

XVI.

But I tould him the sorra a one, as ye'll see ; 'twas no doin'
o' mine.
For whin into his room I was come, that seemed dark, passin'
out o' the shine
O' the sunset just glimmerin' around yet, th' ould master laned
up where he lay
Aftther takin' a bit av a rest on the bed, for the most o' that
day
He'd been creepin' about to get iverythin' readied up dacint
'gin ere
The young master was home. Goodness help him, it's time
he'd enough an' to spare ;
No more need to be hurryin' for that than for Doomsday, if
on'y he'd guessed—
I was sayin', whin I'd knocked at his door, an' slipped in to
decaive him me best,
It's beyant an' forby me his eyes kep' on gazin' and shinin' ; I
thought
Mayhap some one was follyin' behind me, but whin I looked
round I seen nought,
Ne'er a sowl save meself, that I dunna belave he tuk heed on
at all.
An' sez he : " Och, thin, Denis, me lad, so ye're here ? Why,
the step in the hall

Sounded strange-like; and I to be listenin', an' niver to think it was you.

But, in troth, till ye stood in me sight, I'd no aisier belave me luck true

Than if sthraight ye were come from the Dead. For the time, lad, wint wonderful slow,

An' it seems like the lenth o' me life since ye left us this great while ago;

An' sure merely to look down a long lenth o' time sthrikes the could to yer heart,

Let alone whin the days sthretch away, aich like aich, an' nought keeps thim apart

Save the nights, when ye sleep scarce enough for a dhrame that as soon as ye wake

Sets ye grievin'. Thim whiles there's no ind to the notions an ould body'll take—

And I larned, livin' lonesome, 'twas ould I had grown. If I tould ye the half

O' what all I was vexed wid supposin' an' dhreadin', ye couldn't but laugh.

On'y one thing I've settled, no laughin' about it, but sartin' an' sure:

I'll not lose ye that long, lad, agin, for it's more than me mind can endure.

True enough, ye're but young in yer life, and it's best maybe's waitin' unknown

Worlds away from our bit av an Inish; all's one, ye'll ne'er quit it alone,

For there's plinty no younger than me must be rovin' as ould as they are—

It's together we'll go, you and I, lad, next time that ye're thravellin' so far.

Ay, together," sez he. An' wid that come two wails o' the wind, an' between

Sthruck a cry that was wailed by no win' ; 'twas the girls below
raisin' a keen ;
But he laned his head back lookin' plased an' contint ; an' they
kep' keenin' on.
They were keenin' for more than they meant all the while, for
th' ould master was gone.

XVII.

So I'd nary a hand in the matter meself, I may truly declare.
'Twas th' Almighty's own notion that night to decaive him, if
decaivin' it were.
So whativver misfortins th' ould master exparienced, I hould in a
way
He'd the bettermost sort o' bad luck—an' that's somethin'—
because ye may say
His warst throuble as good as ne'er chanced him ; ne'er come
to his hearin' or sight,
And a hurt that ye feel unbeknownst, as the sayin' is, is apt to
be light.
An' bedad he's well out av it all ; it's ourselves have the raison
to grieve
While the say meets the shore for what happint this Inish that
black Holy Eve.
But I'll whisht ; for I'm thinkin' when things have detarmined
to run to the bad,
There's no use in discoorsin' an' frettin' save on'y to dhrive
oneself mad ;
Since the storms, or the blight, or the rint comes agin one
wheriver one goes,
Till one takes the last turnin'. An' thin if it's true, as some
pape suppose,
Better luck follies thim that are lavin' than thim that are bidin'
behind—
Sure it's off ye'll slip one o' these days, an' what need to be
throublin' yer mind?

WALLED OUT;

OR,

ESCHATOLOGY IN A BOG.

“Οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ’ ὕπαρ ἐσθλὸν ὃ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται ;”



WALLED OUT;

OR,

ESCHATOLOGY IN A BOG.

I.

IN last Septimber it was, whin the weather'll be mostly grand,
Wid the sunshine tarnin' the colour o' corn all over the land,
An' the two young gentlemen came to shoot wid their guns an'
their dogs,

A-thrampin' just for divarsion about the hills an' the bogs.
And I thramped afther thim, tho' it's little divarsion I had,
Carryin' the baskits an' all; but sure it's meself was glad
To arn the shillins at sunset, an' iligant lounch be the way;
Mate, an' bread, an' a dhrop to dhrink—ye needed no more that
day.

For, tho' 'twas thick o' the harvist, down here the bogs an' the
hills

Lave on'y narrow slips o' fields for the furrows an' pratie
dhrills;

Terrible quick they're raped an' dug; but what should the
farmer do?

If there's on'y wark for wan, he can't find wages for two.

II.

An' wanst we were ristin' a bit in the sun on the smooth hill-
side,

Where the grass felt warm to yer hand as the fleece av a sheep
for wide

As ye'd look overhead an' around, 'twas all a-blaze and a-glow,
An' the blue was blinkin' up from the blackest bog-houles
below ;

An' the scint o' the bogmint was sthrong on the air, an' niver a
sound

But the plover's pipe that ye'll seldom miss by a lone bit o'
ground.

An' he laned—Misther Pierce—on his ilbow, an' stared at
the sky as he smoked,

Till just in an idle way he sthretched out his hand an' sthroked
The feathers o' wan of the snipe that was kilt an' lay close by
on the grass ;

An' there was the death in the crathur's eyes like a breath
upon glass.

An' sez he : " It's quare to think that a houle ye might bore
wid a pin

'Ill be wide enough to let such a power o' darkness in

On such a power o' light ; an' it's quarer to think," sez he,

" That wan o' these days the like is bound to happen to you an'
me."

Thin Misther Barry, he sez : " Musha, how's wan to know
but there's light

On t'other side o' the dark, as the day comes afther the night ? "

An' " Och," sez Misther Pierce, " what more's our knowin'—
save the mark—

Than guessin' which way the chances run, an' thinks I they
run to the dark ;

Or ilse agin now some glint av a bame'd ha' come slithered an'
slid ;

Sure light's not aisy to hide, an' what for should it be hid ? "

Up he stood wid a sort o' laugh : " If on light," sez he, " ye're
set,

Let's make the most o' this same, as it's all that we're like to
get."

III.

Thim were his words, as I minded well, for often afore an'
 sin
 The 'dintical thought 'ud bother me head that seemed to bother
 him thin ;
 An' many's the time I'd be wond'rin' whatever it all might
 mane,
 The sky, an' the lan', an' the bastes, an' the rist o' thim plain
 as plain,
 And all behind an' beyant thim a big black shadow let fall ;
 Ye'll sthrain the sight out av yer eyes, but there it stands like a
 wall.
 "An' there," sez I to meself, "we're goin' wheriver we go,
 But where we'll be whin we git there it's niver a know I know."
 Thin whiles I thought I was maybe a sthookawn to throuble
 me mind
 Wid sthrivin' to comprehend onnathural things o' the kind ;
 An' Quality, now, that have larnin', might know the rights o'
 the case,
 But ignorant wans like me had betther lave it in pace.

IV.

Praste, tubbe sure, an' Parson, accordin' to what they say,
 The whoule matther's plain as a pikestaff an' clare as the day,
 An' to hear thim talk av a world beyant ye'd think at the laste
 They'd been dead an' buried half their lives, an' had thramped
 it from west to aist ;
 An' who's for above, an' who's for below they've as pat as if they
 could tell
 The name av ivery saint in Hiven an' ivery divil in Hell.
 But throth it's meself niver set much sthore be Parson nor
 yit be Praste—
 Whereby the wife she sez I'm no more nor a haythin baste—

For mighty few o' thim's rael Quality, musha, they're mostly a pack

O' playbians, aich wid a tag to his name an' a long black coat to his back ;

An' it's on'y romancin' they are belike ; a man must stick be his trade,

An' *they* git their livin' by lettin' on they know how wan's sowl is made.

And in chapel or church they're bound to know somethin' for sure, good or bad,

Or where'd be the sinse o' their preachin' an' prayers an' hymns an' howlin' like mad ?

So who'd go mindin' o' thim ? barrin' women, in coorse, an' wanes,

That belave 'most aught ye tell thim, if they don't understand what it manes—

Bedad, if it worn't the nathur o' women to want the wit,
Parson an' Praste I'm a-thinkin' might shut up their shop an' quit.

But, och, it's lost an' disthacted the crathurs 'ud be widout
Their bit o' divarsion on Sundays whin all o' thim gits about,
Cluth'rin' an' plutth'rin' togither like hins, an' a-roostin' in rows,

An' meetin' their frins an' their neighbours, an' wearin' their dacint clothes.

An' sure it's quare that the clargy can't iver agree to keep
Be tellin' the same thrue story, sin' they know such a won'erful heap ;

For many a thing Praste tells ye that Parson sez is a lie,
An' which has a right to be wrong, the divil a much know I,
For all the differ I see 'twixt the pair o' thim 'd fit in a nut :

Wan for the Union, an' wan for the Lague, an' both o' thim bittier as sut.

But Misther Pierce, that's a gintleman born, an' has college
larnin' and all,
There he was starin' no wiser than me where the shadow stands
like a wall.

V.

An' soon after thin, it so happint, things grew so contráry
an' bad,
I fell to wond'rin' a dale if beyant there's aught betther at all
to be had ;
For the blacker this ould world looks, an' the more ye're
bothered an' vexed,
The more ye'll be cravin' an' longin' for somethin' ilse in the
next ;
While whiniver there's little that ails ye, an' all goes slither as
grase,
Ye don't so much as considher, bedad, if there's e'er such a
place.
The same as a man comin' home from his work av a winther's
night,
Whin the wind's like ice, an' the snow an' the rain have him
perished outright,
His heart'll be set on a good turf blaze up the chimney roarin'
an' red,
That'll putt the life in him agin afore he goes to his bed ;
Tho' on summer evenin's, whin soft as silk was ivery breath
that wint,
He'd niver have axed for a fire, but tarned to his sleep con-
tint.

VI.

The first thing that wint agin us, an' sure we were rael
annoyed,
Was when Smithson, he that's steward at the Big House, he
tuk an' desthroyed

Rexy, our little white dog, who we'd rared from no more than a pup,
For a matther o' four or five yare, an' had kep' him an' petted him up.
Hootin' the sheep? If ye'd seen him ye'd know they were tellin' a lie,
He that wasn't the size av a rabbit, an' wouldn't ha' hurted a fly.
And the frinliest baste, morebetoken, ye'd find in a long day's walk,
An' knowin' an' sinsible, too, as many a wan that can talk.
I might come home arly or late, yit afore I was heard or seen,
He'd be off like a shot an' meet me a dozen perch down the boreen ;¹
An' whiles ye'd be kilt wid laughin', that quare were his ways and his thricks—
But there he lay stone dead be the gate at the back o' Hourigan's ricks ;
For it's creepin' home the crathur was in hopes to die nare his frins,
On'y he couldn't creep no furdher wid the leg av him smashed into splins.
An' och, but the house was lonesome whin we'd buried him down be the dyke,
An' the childher bawled themselves sick, for they thought that there wasn't his like ;
An' just this night, comin' up to the door, I was thinkin' I'd give a dale
For the sound av his bark, an' the pat av his paws, an' the wag av his tail.

¹ A narrow lane with high banks.

VII.

An' thin the winther began, on a suddint it seemed, for the
trees
Were flamin' like fire in the wood whin it tuk to perish an'
freeze ;
An' thro' yer bones like a knife wint the win' that come keenin'
around,
An' afther that wid the pours o' rain we were fairly dhrowned.
For the wather'd be runnin' in sthrames benathe the step at the
door,
An' t' ould thatch that's thick wid houles let it dhrip in pools on
the floor,
Till sorra the fire 'ud burn, wid the pate-sods no betther than
mud,
Since the sthacks thimselves outside seemed meltin' away in the
flood.
But the warst av it was those times, that, what wid the wet
an' the frost,
Ne'er a hand's tarn could be done in the fields, so wan's wages
were lost.
Many's the week I could scarce git a job from wan ind to the
other,
An' many's the night they wint hungry to bed, both childher
an' mother—
An', begorra, the hardest day's work a man iver did is to sit
Wid his hands before him at home, whin the childher haven't
a bit.
Thin the wife tuk sick, an' was mortal bad, an' cravin' a
dhrink as she lay,
An' I couldn't so much as git her, the crathur, a sup o' tay ;
An' the floor was says o' mud, an' the house a smother o'
smoke,
Till between thim all, begorra, me heart it was narely broke.

VIII.

But I mind wan Sathurday's night, whin we just were starved
wid the could,
Me mother, she that we keep, an' that's growin' terrible ould,
All av a heap she was crooched be the hearth that was black as
yer grave,
For clane gone out was the fire ; and her ould head niver 'ud lave
Thrimblin' on like a dhrop o' rain that's riddy to fall from the
row,
The faster it thrimbles an' thrimbles the sooner it is to go.
And her poor ould hands were thrimblin' as she sthretched thim
out for the hate,
For she'd gone too blind to see that there wasn't a spark in the
grate ;
Nor bit nor sup she'd had but a crust o' dhry bread that day,
'Cause our praties had rotted on us, an' we'd had to throw thim
away ;
An' I knowed she was vexed, for, sure, it's but doatin' she is
afther all,
And 'ill fret like a child whin she feels that her slice is cut
skimpy an' small ;
But other whiles she'd be gravin' that we'd not got quit av
her yit,
An' misdoubtin' we grudged away from the childher aich morsel
she'd git.
An' watchin' her sittin' there, an' remimb'rin' the life she'd
led,
For me father dhrank, an' she'd throuble enough to keep the
pack av us fed,
An' nary the comfort she'd now, an' she grown faible an'
blind—
I couldn't but think 'twas a cruel bad job for such as she if
behind

The blackness over beyant there was nought but could for the
 could,
 An' dark for the dark—no new world at all to make aminds for
 the ould.
 Tho' in throth it 'ud have to be the quarest world ye could
 name
 That 'ud make it worth wan's while to ha' lived in the likes o'
 this same.

IX.

But the dhrame I dhrimt that night was as sthrange as
 sthrange, for thin
 I thought I had come to a place whose aquil I niver was in,
 An' nobody 'd tould me 'twas out o' this world, yit as soon as I
 came
 Just o' meself I knew it, as people will in a dhrame.
 An' it looked an iligant counthry, an' all in a glimmerin' green,
 The colour o' laves in the spring, wid a thrimble o' mist
 between ;
 An' the smell o' the spring was in it, but the light that sthramed
 over all
 Was liker the shine av a sunset whin laves are beginnin' to
 fall.

X.

An' two were talkin' together, that must ha' been standin'
 nare,
 Tho' out o' me sight they kep' ; an' their voices were plisant to
 hare.
 An' wan o' thim sez to the other : " It's this I don't undherstand,
 The inse o' this wall built yonder around an' about the
 land"—
 An', sure as he spoke I saw where it glimpsed thro' the boughs
 close by—

"For," sez he, "it hides our world, as the thruth is hid be a lie,
From ivery sowl that's alive on the wary arth below,
Till ne'er such a place there might be at all, for aught they can know.
But grand it 'ud be some mornin' to make it melt off like the haze,
An' lave thim a sight o' this land that they're comin' to wan o' these days.
For look ye at Ireland, now, where they're just in a disperit state,
Wid the people sleepin' on mud, an' wantin' the morsel to ait;
If they knew there was betther in store, I dunno what harm could be in't,
Or what it 'ud do but hearten thim up, an' keep them a bit contint."

XI.

Thin t'other: "Mind you, there's many that's new to this place," sez he,
"Comes axin' the same as yerself. But considher the way it 'ud be.
For whin wanst we downed wid the wall, an' nothin' was left to purvint
The poor folks yonder beholdin' the grandeur we've here fornint,
An' rarer a dale, belike, than they'd iver ha' thought or belaved,
Who are the fools that 'ud stay any more where they're throubled an' graived,
An' wouldn't be off wid thim here? Why, now, whin there's nought but a vast
O' shadow an' blackness afore him who looks to his death an' past,

Why, even so, there's a few comes in that life wid its wary
wark

Has dhruv intirely mad, till they laped to their inds in the
dark.

"An' in Ireland, sure, this instant, there's crowds o' thim
sailin' bound

Off to the States an' 'Sthralia, that's half o' the whoule world
round,

Miles an' miles thro' the waves an' storms, an' whin they've
got there, indade,

No such won'erful lands, but just where their livin's aisier made.
An' it's mostly the young folks go, so the ould do be frettin'
sore,

For thim that are gone they doubt 'ill come home in their time
no more ;

An' dhrary as e'er the long winther's night is the lonesome
summer's day,

Whin there's niver a stir in the house, an' the childher are over
the say.

"And, arrah now, wouldn't it be the warst day that ould
Ireland has known,

Whin she'd waken an' find all the people had quitted an' left
her alone ?

Niver a voice to be heard, or a hover o' smoke to be spied,
An' sorra a sowl to set fut on the green o' the grass far an'
wide,

Till the roads ran lone thro' the lan' as the sthrame that most
disolit flows,

An' the bastes, sthrayed away in the fields, grew as wild as the
kites an' the crows,

An' no wan to care what became o' the counthry left starin' an'
stark—

But that's how 'twould happen if iver we let thim look clare
thro' the dark."

XII.

An' the other, sez he : " Thru for ye ; but what seems
sthrange to me yit
Is the notions they've learned down yonder in spite o' this
screen ye've sit ;
For there's many hares tell av a plisint place where a man 'ill
go whin he dies,
An' some be that sartin sure, ye'd think they'd seen it all wid
their eyes."

XIII.

" The raison o' that," sez he, " is, we wouldn't let thim
despair,
Cliver an' clane, any more than we'd show thim the whoule av
it clare ;
So wanst in a while we've given to some poor crathur o' thim
A glimpse at this place, but on'y lapt up in a mist like an' dim.
An' as soon as it slips from their sight 'tis dhrowned in the
darkness deep,
Til sometimes they doubt afther all if 'twas aught but a
dhrame in their sleep.
An' the rist spy nothin' at all, but they hare from the folks that
do,
An' they wish it so bad that often they belave they belave it's
thru.
" But suppose, now, wan that was hungry could watch unbe-
knownst thro' a chink
Where some had a faste preparin', the finest ye iver could
think,
If he thought he'd a chance o' the thrate, sure it's quiet an'
still he'd wait,
For fear if he came ere they called they'd be puttin' him out av
it sthraight."

XIV.

That's all their discoorse I remimber, for thin, as sure as
I'm born,
It was Rexy's bark that I heard—no other baste's, I'll be
sworn :
And I couldn't tell ye the plisure I tuk in't, for somehow the
sound
Seemed givin' a nathural feel to whatever I seen around.
And I just was thinkin' : " It's mad wid joy, poor Rexy, he'd
be if he knew
There was wan av us come from th' ould place at home "—
whin, och wirrasthrew,
All in a minyit I opened me eyes where I lay on the floor,
An' the child was keenin' away, an' the wind moanin' undher
the door,
An' the puddle was freezed by the hearth, that hadn't a spark
to show,
An' outside in the could daylight the air was a-flutther wid
snow,
An' the black bank sthraked wid white like the bars on a
magpie's wing—
For sorra a word o' thruth was in't, an' I'd nought but dhramed
the thing.

XV.

Sorra a word o' thruth—yit some sez that they've niver
a doubt
But there's plinty o' thruth in a dhrame, if ye tarn it the right
side out :
An' I mind me mother, wan night she dhrimt av a ship on the
say,
An' next mornin' her Micky, the sodger, came home that was
yares away.

Thin a notion I have, as I woke, I'd heard wan o' thim two
inside

Sayin' : " Sleep, that's the chink for a glimpse, but death,
that's the door set wide ; "

An' whin things do be cruel conthráry, wid could an' the
hunger an' all,

Some whiles I fall thinkin' : " Sure, maybe, it's on'y a bit o'
their wall. "

So p'rhaps it's a fool that I am, but many's the time, all
the same,

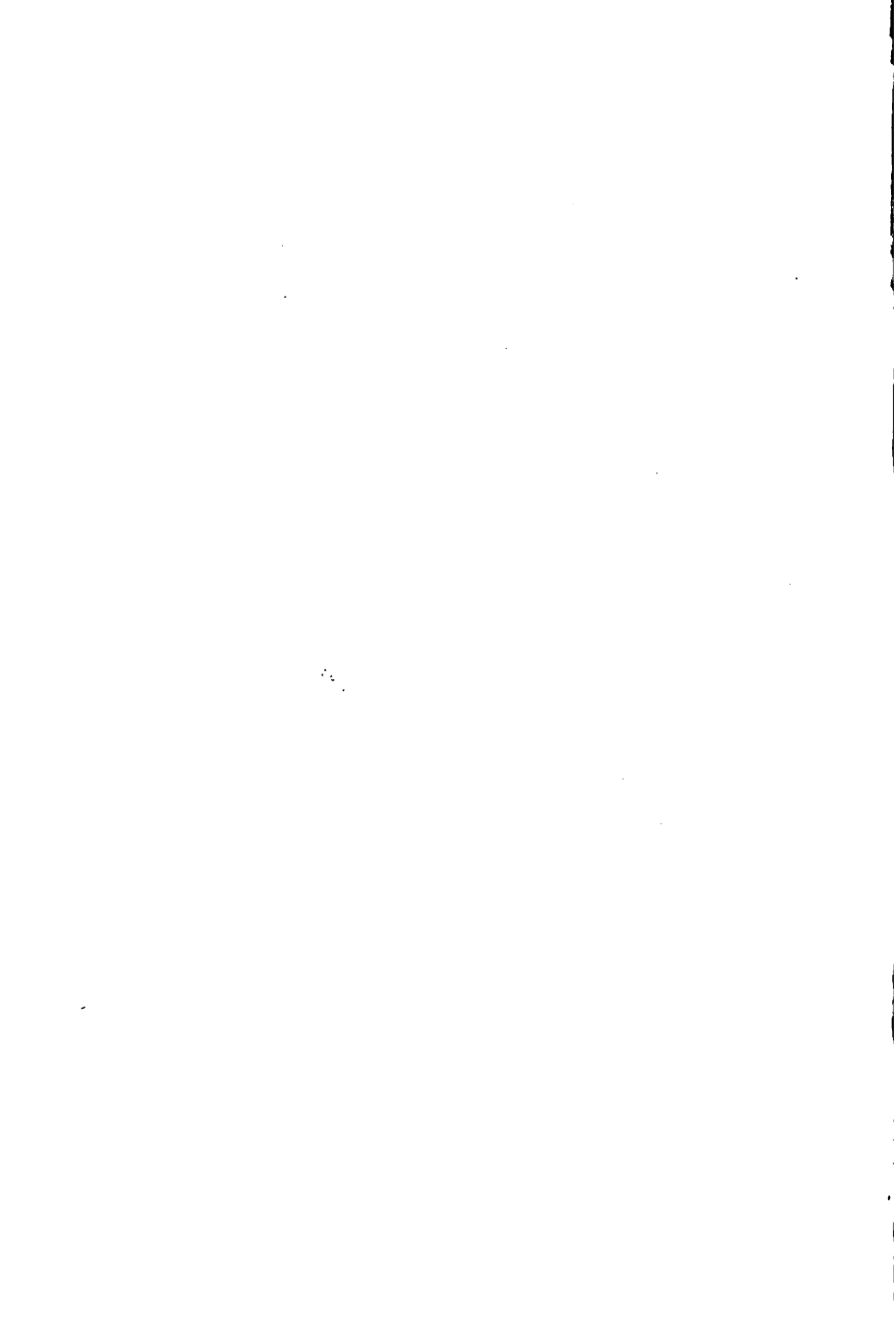
I sez to meself I'd be wishful for just a dhrame o' that dhrame.

LAST TIME AT MCGURK'S;

OR,

MICK FLYNN *DE* SENECTUTE.

. . . “Πολλά μὲν αἱ μακραὶ ἀμέραι κατέθεντο δὴ
λύπας ἐγγυτέρω, τὰ τέρποντα δ'οὐκ ἂν ἴδοις ὅπου. . .”



LAST TIME AT MCGURK'S;

OR,

MICK FLYNN *DE SENECTUTE.*

I.

BETTER nor thirty year sin' Barney McGurk set up
Here by the ould cross-roads, and, begorra, there's many a sup
I've tuk sittin' snug be the hearth in the corner he calls me
own,
For all it's a quare bad custhomer Barney'll ha' found me,
ochone,
This long while back, bringin' sildom or niver the pinny to
spind ;
But Barney McGurk isn't wan that 'ud disremimber a frind.
So many's the warm I've had in the could o' the winther's
night,
For he keeps up the grandest o' fires ; ye'll see the glim av it
bright
Away down the bog ; it's the divil to pass be the door in the
dark,
Whin ye doubt if at home on the bit o' wit floor ye'll find iver
a spark.
And oft o' these summer avenins I've watched how the moon
'ill stale
O'er yonder black ridge o' Knockreagh like the ghost av a
little white sail,

Wid niver a beam to her more than a ball o' the thistle-down'd,
Till she'd drink ivery dhrop o' the light from the breadths o'
the air around,
An' shine like a bubble o' silver that swells an' swells, an' thin
Float off thro' the thick o' the stars. But I'll niver watch her
agin.

II.

Barney, he'd always the luck from the time we were on'y
gossoons.
Look at our Band now: I always was tarrible fond o' th
tunes,
Yet if iver I thried at a note, it's aich finger I had seemed a
thumb,
While Barney, just git me the lad that 'ud bate him at batin
the dhrum,
Th'ould sargint, who'd soldiered in Agypt an' Injy, he swore be
his sowl
There wasn't the rigimint marchin' but he'd aquil it rowlin'
the rowl.
Och! it's thim was the great times entirely for Barney, an'
me, an' the boys,
An' we kep' the neighbours alive wid the capers we had an'
the noise,
For there'd scarce be a moonshiny night but we'd thramp as far
after our Band
As after the plough in the field whin ye're trenchin' an acre o'
land.
Bangin' away, wid the bits o' spalpeens all throt-throttin' be-
side,
An' wishin' their legs were the lenth to keep step, an' the doors
flyin' wide
Wid the girls lookin' out; an' the moonbeams so still on the
fields till we come,
Ye might think all the sounds in the arth had run into aich
boom av our dhrum.

III.

But, throth, I remimber the mornin' we started for Ballynagraile
 To fetch home ould Andy O'Rourke, who'd a twelvemonth in
 Limerick jail
 For fright'nin' the bailiffs—divil mend thim—that dhruv off his
 mare for the tithe,
 And Andy he bid thim begone, or he'd shorten their legs wid
 his scythe.
 So we all were assimbled to meet him ; ye niver behild such a
 throng,
 Down the lenth o' the sthreet, wid folk standin' to see us
 come marchin' along ;
 'Twas as plisint a mornin' in April as iver shone out o' the
 sky,
 An' the brass av our instruments gleamin' was fit to ha'
 dazzled yer eye ;
 But the pólis looked cross as the dogs, 'cause they couldn't be
 rights interfere
 To hinder our lads o' their playin' ; bedad ! an' ye felt, whin
 ye'd hare
 How they wint like the thundher an' lightnin, that after the
 dhrum an' the fife
 Ye could step to the ind o' the world, wid all the plisure in life.
 An' close where I waited, I mind, there came hobblin' out-
 side av his door
 An ould ancient man, I can't tell ye his name—I'd ne'er seen
 him before—
 All doubled in two, wid a beard like a fleece, an' scarce able to
 stand,
 For he shook like a bough in the win', tho' he laned on a stick
 in'aich hand.
 But to notice the glint av his eye, whin they sthruck up *Saint*
Pathrick ; bedad,

If he'd had thim same eyes in his feet, it's a jig he'd ha' danced
there like mad ;
On'y just the wan minyit ; for thin he stared round, seemin'
sthrange to the place,
Till he tarned away back to his door wid a quare sort o' look on
his face,
As if he was layin' his hand off o' somethin' he liefer 'ud hould,
An' soft to himself I heard him : "Sure I'm ould," sez he,
"sure I'm ould."

IV.

There's some things that run on in yer mind like a thrird
that's onavenly spun
Down yer coat-sleeve ; for, after these years, I 'most see him
stand clare in the sun ;
But now, be warse luck, I can tell what I couldn't ha' tould
that day—
The notion he had in his head, whin he said it an' tarned
away.
To be ould—sure, considh'rin' the time ye'll be growin' so
before yer own eyes,
It's quare how whiniver ye think o't, it seems like a sort o'
surprise ;
My belafe's that if people were sivinty the very first day they
were born,
They'd niver git used to it rightly, and if, be odd chance, some
fine morn
The ouldest ould man in the counthry would find whin he
wakened that he
Was a slip av a lad, he'd just feel it the nathur'lest thing that
could be.
So it's noways too sthrange if wan's sometimes forgittin' awhile
how things stand,
Like the ould chap at Ballynagraile, whin his mind was tuk
up wid our Band.

V.

But the marchin' around, an' the tunes, an' the thricks that
the young fellows play,
'Tisn't thim ye think badly o' missin', at laste on'y wanst in a
way ;

For, as far as I know be exparience, ye'll mostly be plased
nigh as well

If the childher've their bit o' divarsion the same as ye had
yersel' ;

An' yer legs git so stiff av an avenin', that after yer day's
work is done

Ye're contint wid the full o' yer pipe at the door, and a
sight o' the fun.

It's yer work, yer day's work ; that's the mischief. It's little
enough I knew,

Whin the sun had me scorched to the bone, or the win' maybe
perished right thro',

In the field or the bog, as might chance, an' I'd think to me-
self I could wish

Nought betther than niver agin to be loadin' a cart or a kish—
It's little I knew ; for, sure, now, whin I couldn't to save o' me
sowl

So much just as carry a creel to our heap from the next bog-
houle,

The two eyes I'd give out o' me head to be peltin' away at it
still,

Mowin' a midow, or cuttin' the tarf, aye, or ploughin' up hill.

For I hate to be harin' the lads tarnin' out whin the dawn
blinks in,

And I lyin' there like a log wid the sorra a job to begin,

Barrin' helpin' to ait up the praties, an' they none too plinty
perhaps ;

Sure, the pig's worther keepin', poor baste, for it's fatter he
gits on his scraps.

So at home be the hearth-stone I stick, or I creep up an' down
be the wall,
An' the day feels as long as a week, an' there seems no sinse in
it all.

VI.

And in throth I've no call to be laid on the shelf yit, as ould
as I be :
There's Thady O'Neill up above, that's a year or so sanior to
me,
An' passin' his haggart just now, I seen where his midow is
mought,
An' himself in it stoopin' away as soople an' limber as aught ;
An' the Widdy Maclean, that was married afore I was three
feet high,
She'll thramp her three mile to the town ivery market day that
comes by.
'Twas the fever, last Lent was a twelvemonth, disthroyed
me ; I'm fit for nought since.
The way av it was : Our ould cow had sthrayed off thro' the gap
in the fince,
An' Long Daly he met me an' tould me. Sez he : " An' ye'll
need to make haste,
If it's dhry-fut ye'd find her this night." For away o'er the
hills to the aist
The hail-showers were slantin' in sthrakes ; an' thin wanst
clane across wid a swipe
Wint the lightnin'. An' : " Look-a," sez he, " there's Saint
Pather a-kindlin' his pipe ;
That 'ill take a good sup to putt out." An', thrue for him, he'd
scarce tarned his back,
Whin it settled to polther an' pour, an' the sky overhead grew
as black
As the botthomless pit ; not a stim could I see, nor a sight o'
the baste,

But, sthravadin' about in the bog, I slipped into a houle to me waist,
 An' was niver so nare dhrownin' dead, forby bein' dhrinched to the skin ;
 So I groped me way home thro' the dark in the teeth av a freezin' win'.
 An' next mornin' I couldn't move finger nor fut, all me limbs were that sore,
 And I lay there a-ravin' like wild in me bed for a month an' more ;
 For me head was on fire, an' the pains was like gimlits an' knives in me bones,
 Till the neighbours a-goin' the road did be harin' me groans an' me moans.
 An' thin, whin I'd over'd the warst, as the Dochter'd not looked for at all,
 Sure, the strenth was gone out o' me clane, an' I scarcely was able to crawl,
 An' that stooped, any rapin'-hook's sthraighter than me, an' the jints o' me stift,
 An' me fingers as crookt as the claws av a kite, wid no use in thim lift ;
 An' whin first I got on me ould brogues, I stuck fast like a wheel in a rut,
 I seemed raisin' the weight o' the world ivery time that I lifted me fut.

VII.

So I sat in the door not long afther, whin Judy O'Neill comes by,
 An' : " Bedad, Mick Flynn, ye're an ould man grown," sez she ;
 an' : " Git out !" sez I.
 But as soon as she'd passed I stepped round to the field that the lads were in,

For I thought I'd been idlin' enough, an' 'twas time I set to it agin.

They were diggin' the first of the praties ; I smilt thim 'fore iver I came,

An' I dunno a plisinter scint in the world than the smill o' thim same,

Whin ye thrust down yer spade or yer fork, an' ye tarn thim up hangin' in clumps,

Wid the skins o' thim yellor an' smooth, an' the clay shakin' off thim in lumps.

They'd a creel on the bank be the gate, an' Pat called from his ind o' the dhrill

To be bringin' it up where he was, for he wanted another to fill ; And I thought to ha' lifted it light, but I'd betther ha' let it alone,

Tho' 'twas hardly three-parts full, an' 'ud hould but a couple o' stone ;

For I hadn't the strenth to hoist it, and over it wint wid a pitch, An' there like a sthooakaun I stood, an' the praties rowled in the ditch.

But Pat, whin he seen I was vexed, up he come an' laid hould o' me arm,

An' he bid me niver to mind, for there wasn't a ha'porth o' harm.

An' sez I : "I'm not able for aught." An' sez he : "Dad, ye've worked in yer day

Like a Trojin, an' now ye've a right to yer rist, while we'll worsle away.

Sure it's many a creel ye've loaded afore I'd the strenth or the wit ;

And ye needn't be throublin' yer head, for there's plinty av hilp I'll git ;

Here's Larry an' Tim grown sizeable lads, an' Joe'll soon be lendin' a hand—

So ye'll just sit quite in yer corner, an' see that we'll git on grand."

And he said it as kind as could be, yit me heart felt as heavy as lead,
And I wint to the door, and I sat in the sun, but I wished I was dead.

VIII.

He's been always a good son, Pat, an' the wife, there's no fau't in his wife,
Sure she's doin' her bist to keep house sin' me ould woman lost her life ;
But the throuble she's had—och ! the crathur, small blame to her now if she'd think
It was time they were quit av a wan fit for nought save to ait an' to dhrink.

For whiles, whin she's washin' the praties, or cuttin' the childher's bread,
I know be the look av her face she's remimb'rin' the child that's dead ;
The littlest, that died in last winther, and often afore it died
Did be askin' its mammy for bread, an' thin, 'cause she'd none, it cried ;
An' the Dochter he said 'twas the hunger had kilt it ; an' that was the case :
Ye could see thro' its wee bits av hands, an' its eyes were as big as its face.
An' whiles whin I'm aitin' me crust, I'll be thinkin' to hare it cry—
But *she*, that's the mother who bore it—who'd blame her ? In throth not I.

Och ! but that was the tarrible winther, an' like to ha' starved us outright ;
Ne'er a hungrier saison I mind since the first o' the pratie blight ;

An' whine'er wan's no call to be hungry, it's three times as
hungry wan feels,
An' so I that worked niver a sthroke, I did always be great at
me meals.
Yit I spared thim the most that I could, for o' nights whin I
noticed our heap
O' praties looked small in the pot, I'd let on I was fast asleep ;
So Molly she'd spake to the childher, an' bid thim to whisht
an' be quite,
For if gran'daddy sted on asleep, he'd be wantin' no supper
that night ;
Thin, the crathurs, as cautious an' cute as the mice they'd all
keep whin they heard,
An' to think that the little childher'd sit watchin', not darin' a
word,
But hush-hushin' wan to the other, for fear I might happin to
wake
And ait up their morsel o' food—sure me heart did be ready to
break.

IX.

Thin I'd think : "There's the House ; aye, an' thin they'd be
fewer to starve an' to stint ;"
Yit I hated the thought, an' kep' hopin' I'd maybe be dead ere
I wint.
But I'm just afther harin' this day what has settled me plans in
me mind,
Like as if I had tarned round me face ; and I won't go a-lookin'
behind.
I'd been sthreelin' about in the slip at the back, whin I
thought I'd creep down
An' see what was up at McGurk's, for it's weeks since I've been
in the town ;
So round to the front I was come, an' the first thing that iver I
seen

Was two gintlemen close to our door, an' a car standin' down
the boreen.

There was wan o' the two was a sthranger, a stout little man,
wid aich square

O' the checks on his coateen the size av our own bit o' field
very nare ;

Divil much to be lookin' at aither, tho' here the lads tould me
as how

'Twas no less than our Landlord himself, that we'd niver set
eyes on till now.

For away off in England he lives, where they say he's an iligant
place

Wid big walls round it sivin mile long, and owns dozens av
horses to race,

That costs him a fortin to keep ; so whin all av his money is
spint,

He sends word over here to the Agint, an' bids him make
haste wid the rint.

An' the other's the Agint ; I know him ; worse luck, I've
known many a wan,

An' it's sorra much good o' thim all. I remimber the carryins on
We'd have in the ould times at home, whin we heard he was
comin' his round :

For, suppose we'd a calf or a heifer, we'd dhrive her off into the
pound,

Or if we'd a firkin of butther, we'd hide it away in the thatch.

Aye, bedad, if we'd even so much as an old hin a-sittin' to
hatch,

We'd clap her in undher the bed, out o' sight, for, mind you,
we knew right well

He'd be raisin' the rint on us sthraight, if he spied that we'd
aught to sell.

I've heard tell there's a change in the law, an' the rint takes
three Jidges to fix,

So it isn't as aisy these times for an Agint to play thim bad
thricks ;
I dunno the rights av it clare, but all's wan, for he would if he
could ;
And as soon as I seen him this day, I was sure he'd come afther
no good.
But I slipped the wrong side o' the bank ere they heard me,
an' there I sat still,
An' they came an' stood nigh it to wait, while their car crep'
along up the hill.

X.

And Turner, the Agint, looked back to the house : " Well,
yer Lordship," he sez,
" That's a case for eviction ; we'll scarce see a pinny while wan
o' thim stez.
Why, they haven't a goose or a hin, let alone e'er a baste on
the land,
So where we're to look for our money is more nor I undher-
stand.
But in coorse the man's axin' for time." An' sez t'other, " Con-
found him ! in coorse—
'Tis their thrade to be axin' for that, if ye're axin' a pound for
yer poorse.
They may have their damned time, sure, an' welcome, as long
as they plase, on'y first
They'll pay up or clare out." An' the Agint he laughed till
ye'd think he'd ha' burst.
An' sez he, " Thin ' clare out ' 'll be the word, and my notion's
we'll find that it pays,
If we pull down thim ould sticks o' cabins, an' putt in the
cattle to graze ;
Faith, I'd liefer see sheep on the land than the likes o' that
breed any day,"

Sez he, pointin' his hand to the dyke, where the childher, poor
sowls, were at play.
An' the Lord sez, "It's on'y a pity we can't git the lap av a
wave
Just for wanst, o'er the whoule o' the counthry ; no ind to the
throuble 'twould save,
And lave the place *clane*." An' the Agint laughed hearty ; sez
he : " Our best start,
Since we can't git thim undher the wather, is sindin' thim over
it smart.
An' these Flynns here we'd imigraph aisy ; they've siveral lads
narely grown ;
The on'y dhrawback's the ould father, we'll just have to let
him alone,
For the son sez he's sheer past his work, an' that niver 'ud do
in the States ;
It's a burthen he's been on their hands for this great while—
he'll go on the rates.
Sure, the Union's the place for the likes av him, so long as he
bides above."
But be this time their car had come by, an' up wid thim, an'
off they dhruv.

XI.

I'd ne'er ha' thought Patsy'd say that ; an' he didn't belike
—I dunno—
But it's marelly the truth if he did. A burthen? Bedad, I'm
so.
An' Pat, that's a rael good son, and has been all the days av
his life,
It's the quare thanks I'm givin' him now, to be starvin' the
childher and wife.
For I often considher a sayin' we have : " Whin it's little ye've
got,

It's the hunger ye'll find at the botthom, if many dip spoons in yer pot."

But if wanst they were shut o' meself, an' the Agint 'ud wait for a bit,

They might weather the worst o' the throuble, an' keep the ould roof o'er thim yit.

But suppose they're putt out afther all, an' packed off to the devil knows where,

An' I up away in the House, I might niver so happin to hare ;

An' I'd liefer not know it for sartin. Och ! to think the ould place was a roon,

Wid nought lift save the rims o' four walls, that the weeds 'ud be coverin' soon ;

An' the bastes o' the field walkin' in ; an' the houle where the hearth was filled

Wid the briers ; an' no thrace o' the shed that I helped me poor father to build,

An' I but a slip av a lad, an' that plased to be handlin' the tools,

I 'most hammered the head off aich nail that I dhruv. Och, it's boys that are fools.

XII.

'Tis sivin mile good into Westport ; I niver could thramp it so far,

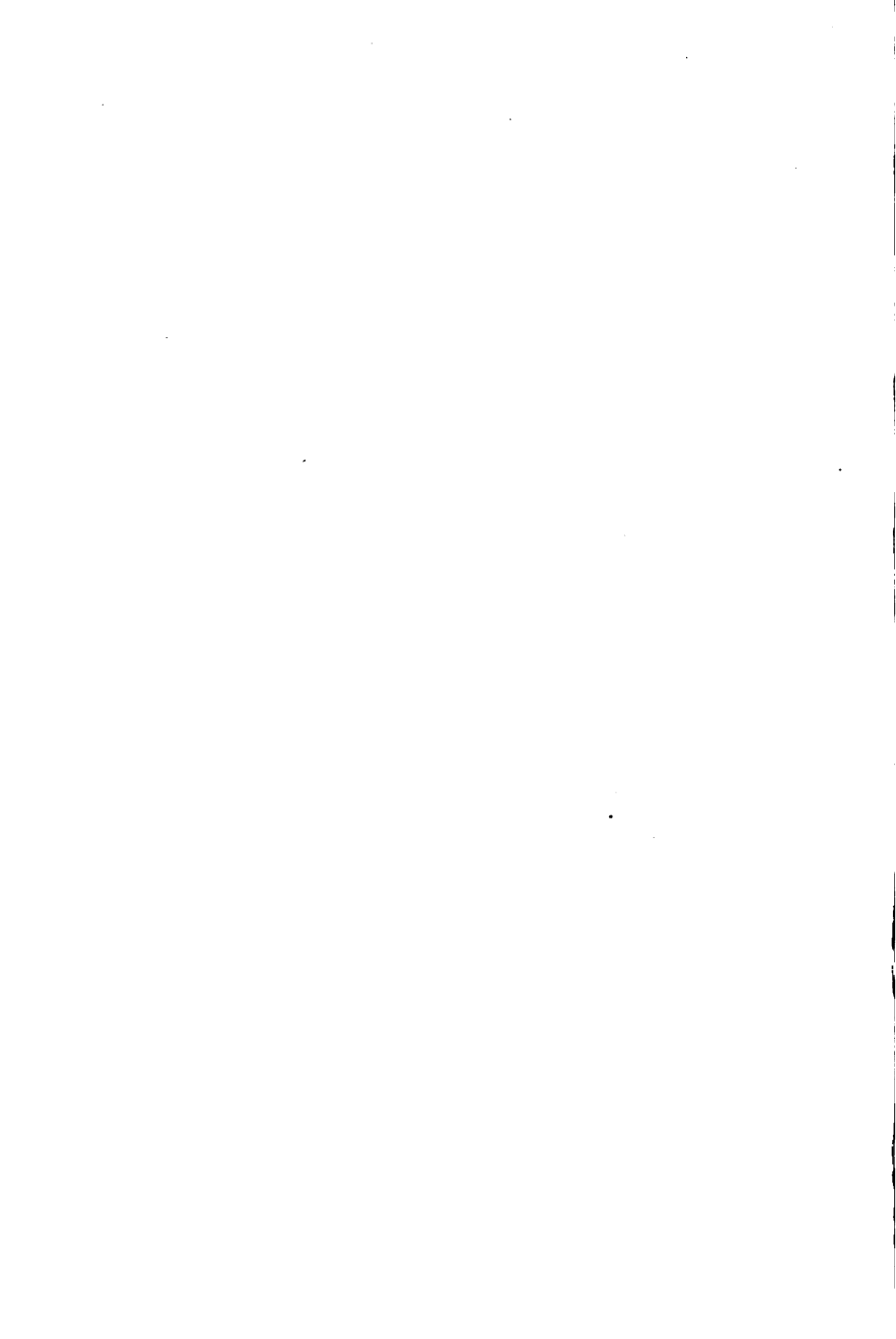
But Tim Daly dhrives there av a Friday ; he'll loan me a sate on his car.

An' Friday's to-morra, ochone ! so I'm nare now to seein' me last

O' Barney, an' Pat, an' the childher, an' all the ould times seem past.

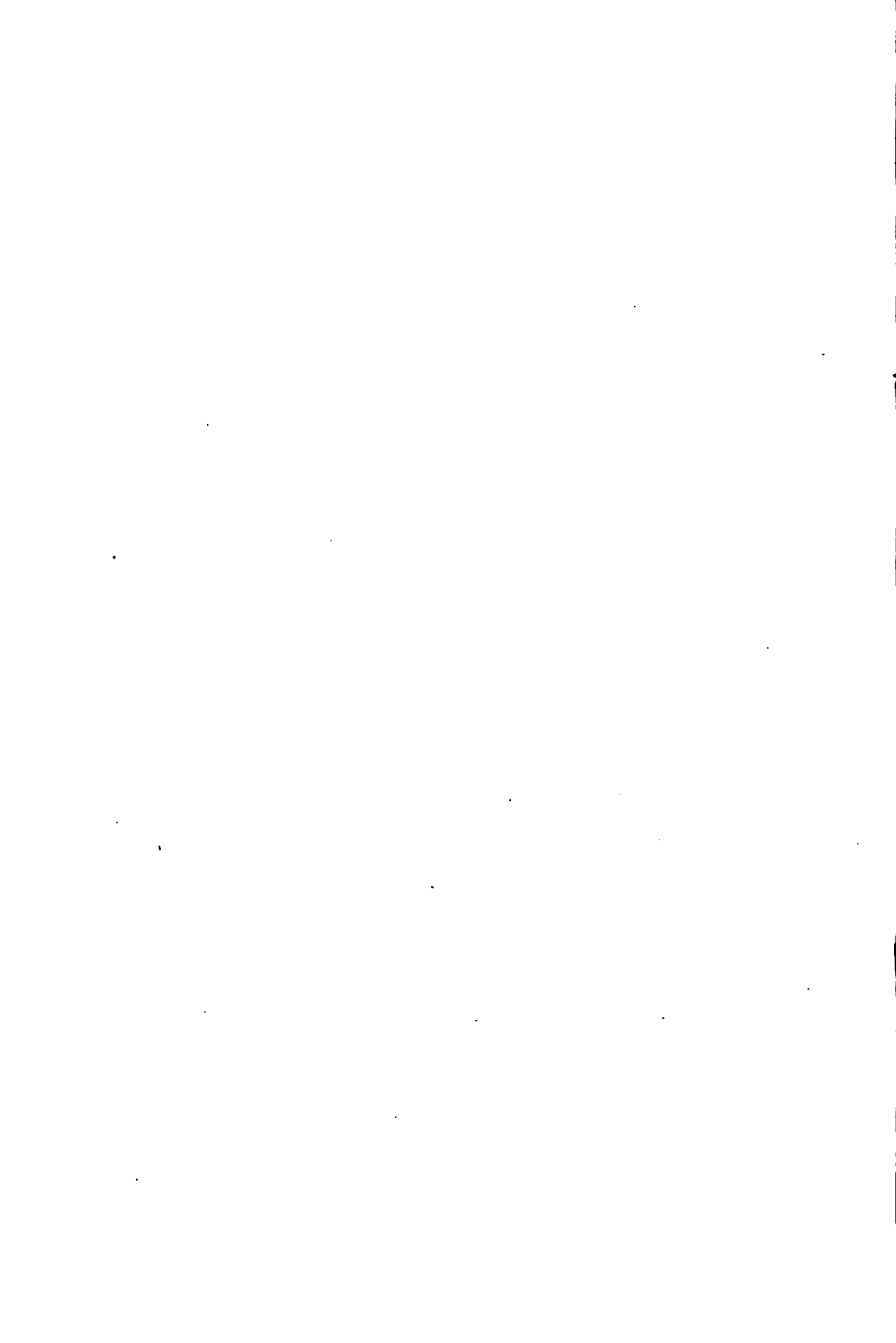
I remimber the House goin' by it. It stands on a bit av a rise,

Stone-black, lookin' over the lan', wid its windows all starin'
like eyes ;
And it's lonesome an' sthrange I'll be feelin', wid ne'er a frind's
face to behould ;
An' the days 'ill go dhrary an' slow. But I'm ould, plase God,
I'm ould.



BY THE BOG-HOULE.

"Non omni somno securius exstat?"



BY THE BOG-HOULE.

I.

AYE, her people an' mine we lived next door at the end o' the
long boreen,
Afore it runs out on the breadth o' the bog where the black
land bates the green ;
An' Nelly's mother 'ud always give me a plisint word passin'
thim by,
As I dhruv out our cow av a mornin', an' meself scarce her
showlder high.
An' Nelly she'd crawl up the step, an' stump afther me into the
lane,
An' she'd throt, callin' : "'Top, Dimmy, 'top !" for she couldn't
run sthraight, or spake plain ;
And her mother'd say, " Jimmy, me lad, if I trust her along
wid ye there,
Keep yer eye on her ; mind the big houle ; for yer life don't
be lettin' her nare."
So it's many a day I'd be keepin' me eye on the child an' the
baste,
That had mostly a mind to be goin' wheriver ye wanted thim
laste ;
An' th' ould cow'd sthray away thro' the bog, if she couldn't find
mischief to do
Thramplin' fences an' fields ; but it's Nelly herself was the
warst o' the two.

For ere iver ye'd know, there she'd be like a scut av a rabbit
a-creep—
She'd creep faster thim whiles than she'd walk—down the bank
where the houle's lyin' deep ;
An' it's thin I'd the wark o' the warld to be catchin' her an'
coaxin' her back,
Such a fancy she'd tuk to the place, an' it lookin' so ugly an'
black,
Wid its sides cut wall-sthraight wid the spade, an' the wather
like midnight below,
Lyin' far out o' reach ; overhead all the storm-winds may
blusther an' blow,
But 'tis still as a floor o' stone flags, an' its depth ye can't
measure noways ;
Sure if Nelly had crep' o'er the edge, she'd ha' crep' to the ind
av her days.

II.

But the years wint till Nelly'd more wit than to dhrown av
herself in a houle,
An' meself was a size to git wark in the fields ; yit, fair weather
or foul,
Whin a holiday come we'd be out rovin' round on the bog, she
an' me,
For we always kep' frinds ; and it's lonesome was Nell, since
the mother, ye see,
Tuk an' died wan hard winter, warse luck—a bad job for the
little colleen—
And her brothers had gone to the States, and her father was
fond o' potheen,
And 'ud bide dhrinkin' dhrops down at Byrne's till he hadn't a
thought in his head ;
So that, barrin' ould Granny an' me, all her company'd quit or
was dead.

III.

There's a bit av a hill rises up, right fornint the big houle—
the same sort
As ye'll count be the dozen in bogs, wid the grass on't fine-
bladed an' short,
An' the furzes an' broom in a ruffle a-top, an' flat stones peepin
out,
Where it's plisint to sit in the sun and be lookin' around and
about,
Whin the bog wid its stacks and its pools spreads away to the
rim o' the blue
That lanes over as clare as a glass, on'y somehow wan ne'er
can see thro'.
An' there's plinty to mind, sure, if merely ye look to the grass
at yer feet,
For 'tis thick wid the tussocks av heather, an' blossoms and
herbs that smell sweet
If ye thread thim; an' maybe the white o' the bog-cotton
waved in the win',
Like the wool ye might shear off a night-moth, an' set an ould
fairy to spin;
Or wee frauns, aich wan stuck 'twixt two leaves on a grand
little stim av its own,
Lettin' on 'twas a plum on a tree; an' the briers thrailed o'er
many a stone
Dhroppin' dewberries, black-ripe and soft, fit to melt into juice
in yer hould;
An' the bare stones thimselves do be dusted wid circles o' silver
an' gould—
Nelly called thim the moon an' the sun—an' grey patches like
moss that's got froze,
Wid white cups in't that take a red rim by the time we've the
sheaves up in rows;

I'd be vexed whin they turned, for a sign that the summer was
slippin' away,
But poor Nelly was pleased wid the little bright sthrakes growin'
broader aich day.

IV.

So wan avenin'—I know if I think, 'twas whin last they were
cuttin' the oats,
Maybe four months from now, whin outside past the bars there's
an odd snow-flake floats,
But it seems to me feelin' a world's breadth away, and a life's
lenth ago—
Well, the two av us sat on the hill, an' the sun was about gettin'
low,
An' there wasn't a ray on the lan', for the dhrift o' dark cloud
overhead
Sthretched away like a roof, till just rimmin' the west ran the
light in a thread,
Same as if 'twas a lid liftin' up on bright hinges ; an' nary a
breath
Thro' the leaves or the grass, for the win' niver stirred, an'
'twas stiller than death.
An' so Nelly'd a poppy-bud pulled, wid the red all crased up
in the green,
An' sat smoothin' its leaves on her lap, till ye saw its black heart
in between ;
An' her hair curlin' over the shine av her eyes, an' a smile on
her mouth,
As I knew by the dint in her cheek turned aside from me. Sure
'twas the truth,
But I dunno for why av a suddint the notion come into me
mind
That in all o' that bog-land it's Nell was the purtiest thing ye
could find ;

An' thinks I : "Sure the slip av a lass, whin the days o' me life
do be dark,
Is the same as yon glame in the west that widout it has sorra a
spark."

V.

But that instiant he stepped round the ind o' the turf-stack
fornint the boreen,
Wid a scarlet to aquil the poppies ablaze on his bit o' coateen,
And his belts and his straps and his buckles as white an' as
bright as could shine—
Whin a dragon-fly sits on the slant o' the sun he looks some-
thin' as fine—
Till he seemed to be lightin' a dazzle an' glitter each step that
he stirred ;
And his little red cap set a-top wid a cock, like the crest av a
bird,
And his sword-handle stuck be his side, an' the stripes o' gould
lace down his sleeve ;
And himself was just Felix Magrath comin' home to his father's
on leave.

VI.

The red-coats—I seen thim at Christmas, when 'victions was
down at Drumloe,
Standin' watchin' the ould folk an' childher putt out in the
flurries o' snow,
And it's thin they looked bittther an' black as their powdher an'
steel, man for man,
But—I'll say that for Felix Magrath—find a plisinter lad if ye
can.
For he seemed somehow heartenin' things up, whin he stepped
along sthraight as a dart,
Maybe twirlin' his bit av a stick to a tune like, that dacint an'
smart

That ye'd feel, clumpin' on be his side, like a quare sort o'
raggety gawk.
Thin to hare him discoorse; ye might listen from mornin' till
night to his talk,
He'd such stories av all he'd behild in thim lands where they
fight wid the blacks,
Where the quariousest things ye could think do be plinty as
turf-sods in stacks.
And he'd medals that set him remimb'rin' wan day whin the
guns let a roar
From the ridge o' the sandhills close by, where they'd come
since the evenin' before;
An' it's mountin' they all were next minyit, an' waitin' the word
o' command,
Wid his baste in a quiver to start, sthrainin' hard on the reins
in his hand,
An' thim other lads passin' thim on to the front till their hearts
were nigh broke,
Thramp an' thramp, wid the bands playin' march-tunes a-head
thro' the booms in the smoke;
Thin the bugle rang out—Och, I've ne'er heard the like, yet
wan aisy can tell
They'd ha' lep' all the locked gates av Heaven to ride wid that
music to Hell.

VII.

So if Nell tuk a plisure in listenin', the same as the rest o'
thim, why
'Twas small blame to her; that's what I said to meself; but it
seemed like a lie.
An' whine'er I come home from me work, an' seen niver a sowl
be the hedge,
Where there'd most whiles be Nelly to meet me, but, happen,
away on the edge

O' the hill-slope a pair standin' dark 'ginst the clare o' the sun-
set, och thin
All the fire that was dead in the sky seemed flared up to a
burnin' agin
In the core o' me heart ; an' the first thing I knew I'd be rippin'
an oath,
Wid me fingers clenched hard in a rage, like as if they were
grippin' his throat ;
An' I'd swear to meself that whin wanst he was parted from
Nelly that night,
I'd slip afther him back to his place, an' pervoke him some way
to a fight,
As I ready might do if I plased, an' no throuble about it at
all,
For it's aisier risin' a quarrel than sthrikin' a match on a wall.
An' bedad if it come to that work, it's meself might be havin'
the pull,
For I stood a head taller than he, and I'd always the strenth
av a bull ;
An' 'twas likely enough if I mastered him thin, he'd take off
out o' this,
An' leave Nelly an' me to ourselves as if naught had befallen
amiss ;
An' thin Nelly'd percaive there was more in the world than a
gay bit o' red—
So thinks I to meself ; but, sure, musha, wan's thoughts is like
beads off a thread,
Slippin' aich afther aich in a hurry : so I kep' considherin' on,
Till the next thought I had was if Nelly'd be fretted whin Felix
was gone.
For I knew that the comfort was crep' from me life like the
light from the day
Since she'd tuk up wid him ; an' belike now if aught chanced
that dhruv him away,

She'd be heart-broke. An' what call had I to go vex her wid
comin' between,
Whin she'd liefer have him than meself in me shows av ould
brogues an' caubeen?
"Divil take me," sez I, "thin it's schamin' I am to have Nelly
to wake
Wid her heart ivery mornin' like lead, if there's lead that can
thrimble and ache,
Wid no plisure in aught, feelin' lonesome an' lost in the world
dhrare an' wild—
I might better ha' left her to dhrown, an' she on'y an imp av
a child."

VIII.

But there's whiles whin the troubles ye're dhreadin' seem
comin' be conthrary ways,
An' ye'll wondher what road ye should turn from the worst till
yer mind's in a maze,
Like me own, whin I heard what the neighbours were sayin' o'
Nelly. Bedad,
It's the lasses were jealous I know—but they all would go bail
Magrath's lad
Was just foolin' the girl for the sake o' divarsion as sartin as
fate,
Wid his slootherin' talk, and his thrapesin' afther her arly an'
late,
Till she'd come to no good. Aye, mayhap, it was nothin' but
invy an' spite,
Yet it seemed to meself whin the neighbours called Felix a
rogue, they said right;
An' thin Nell'd got no mother to mind her. I couldn't tell what
to be at,
For if all that they talked was the truth, I'd ha' choked him as
soon as a rat;

But the truth was as hard to piece out as a page whin the half
av it's torn ;
An' I'd think 'twixt us both Nell might fare like a little white
rose on the thorn,
That two childher'll be scuffin' an' tusslin' to grab, 'cause it's
purty an' sweet,
Till its leaves is shook off in a shower, an' throd down in
the dust at their feet.

IX.

An' thim avenins I felt to be hatin' whatever I seen or I
heard,
So I'd slinge away into the house, where I'd nowan to give me
a word,
An' the corners is black at noonday. But I couldn't shut out
o' me sight
How the west where the sun had gone by would be swimmin'
brimful wid clare light,
An' as fast as it dhrained off the stars 'ud be slippin' this side o'
the sky,
Like the rain-dhrops that rowl down and hang from the blade-
points ; it's Nelly and I
Did be watchin' thim many a time ; an' sure now she was
watchin' wid *him*,
An' what differ to her ? But a wolf whin he's tearin' a man limb
from limb
Might ha' frindlier feelin's than me, whin I fancied the two o'
thim there,
Sthrollin' aisy, while Felix'd be stickin' red poppies in Nelly's
black hair,
As I seen him wan avenin', or pullin' her kingcups along be the
pool,
An' they both talkin' low, an' it's like enough laughin' at me for
a fool

That had tuk off to sulk be himself. I'd ha' sworn I was harin'
 him laugh ;
 An' I wanst grabbed me blackthorn that laned be the wall an'
 I snapped it in half
 Like a withy, ere I knew what I done, and it thick as yer wrist-
 bone. An' thin
 There'd be Granny, that sat on the step wid her knittin', would
 keep peerin' in,
 Thinkin' maybe I'd speak to her plisint some while ; for the
 crathur was scared,
 An' she dursn't so much as be askin' what ailed me ; but little
 I cared,
 Or it's plased in a manner I was wid the notion I'd somebody
 vexed,
 An' I'd often scarce open me lips, good or bad, from wan light
 till the next.
 Och, but slow wint the time, an' I crouched in the dark like a
 baste in his lair,
crueller Ragin' crueler than bastes, barrin' divils. Sure mad ye'd go,
 mad wid despair,
 If ye hadn't the thought that the ind o' the ind, whatsoe'er may
 befall,
 Is nought else save a paice and a quiet, where ye'll disre-
 mimer it all.

X.

Well, wan night, comin' home agin sundown, I met wid some
 girls at the gate
 Beyant Reilly's, an' Biddy O'Loughlin : " Och, Jimmy," sez she,
 " man, ye're late ;
 For we seen thim just now, passin' by nare the pool at the fut
 o' the hill,
 Yer sweetheart an' *her* sweetheart, thick as two thieves. Ye
 might find thim there still,

If ye stirred yerself," sez she. Sez I : " Find a sweetheart, me lass, o' yer own,
And it's thin ye'd be maybe contint to let other folks' sweet-hearts alone."
So sez I ; but I thought to meself I'd turn back be the way that I came,
An' keep out o' the sight o' the houle. But it's there I wint sthraight all the same.

XI.

There were showers about on the bog, an' the blast risin' up wid a keen
Dhruv the wet in me eyes as I come towards the houle till the slope falls between ;
And I tuk a look round, sharp an' quick, as ye'd touch a red coal wid yer hand—
Ne'er a sign av him—nowan but Nell—sure a light seemed to slip o'er the land.
But it's kneelin' she was on the edge, stoopin' low o'er the blackness widin,
And I called to her : " Mind yerself, Nell ! " for to see her ran could thro' me skin.
But wid that she lept up to her feet, an' just ready she stood for a spring,
Niver liftin' her eyes from the wather. So sthraight as a stone from a sling
I was down the hill-side, an' I dhragged her away, tho' it's past wan's belaiif
How she sthrove in me arms, until hard set I was to be houldin' her safe.
Thin she tuk to stan' still av a suddint, an' sez to me soft like an' low :
" For the love o' the Mother o' Marcy, don't be keepin' me, lad, let me go."

An' sez I to her : " Nelly, me darlint, I've made up me mind in
the nights
That I'd give ye to Felix Magrath ; for, sure, how should I
grudge you be rights,
If it's him yer heart's set on ? I'll keep meself quite ; there's
no more to be said.
But yon hajous black houle—och, it's often I've promised yer
mother that's dead
I'd ne'er let that git hould o' ye. Time and agin I'll ha' hauled
ye along
Up this bank, an' ye fightin' as fierce as a kitten, an' narely as
sthrong,
And abusin' me all ye could think, in the rage o' ye. Now, be
me sowl,
I'd not keep ye from wan that was plisint an' kind, but I'll chate
the black houle."
So sez I ; but sez she wid a cry that was like a wild bird's on
the air :
" 'Tis to Felix I'm goin', to Felix, that's lyin' an' dhrownin'
down there."

XII.

Och, the world gave a reel ; och, the words meant no more
than the thunderclaps mane,
Thro' the roar in me ears, till I saw thim black sods that were
soft wid the rain
All fresh thrampled, an' scrawmed on the edge were the prints
left where somewan had gript
For dare life wid his fingers—God help him whin heavy he
grew, an' they slipt,
And he dug his nails hard—an' they slipt. An' in Nelly's own
bit av a hand,
That I'd caught, was a scrap o' gould lace ; an' his cap wid its
bright-shinin' band

Hung there waved on a brier ; but the wather lay smooth. An' sez I : " In God's name,
 What was that ye said, Nelly?" An' sez she : "'Twas but now ; he was here whin I came.
 An' sez he, whin the rain-dhrops began : 'Now the fine weather's broke, I'll be sworn,
 But it's lasted as long as me leave, for I'm off to the Curragh the morn.'
 So sez I : " Is it that soon ye'll be goin'?" An' sez he : " Sure, if longer I'd stay,
 What at all would the wife there be doin' ? She'd think that I'd scooted away ;
 Och, it's ragin' she'd be like the mischief. But, Nelly," sez he, " wife or no,
 Ye're the purtiest girl I e'er seen, an' ye'll give me a kiss ere I go."
 But I pushed him away, and I sez : " Ne'er a kiss ye'll be gittin' from me."
 An' I turned to run home, an' the sky'd grown so dark that I scarcely could see.
 Thin he tuk a step back—sure belike he forgot he stood close to the bank—
 An' he fell, an' he held to the edge, but he dhropped in the wather an' sank.
 An' he's dhrownin'—leave go o' me, Jimmy—ye stookawn—I'd aisy jump down—
 It's yer fau't if ye hinder me savin' him—yer doin' for lettin' him dhrown,
 That's me sweetheart. " Och, Felix," sez she, " I'd give body an' sowl for yer life,
 Felix darlint." I knew it afore, yet to hear her seemed twistin' a knife
 That was stuck in me heart. But I held her the closer. I've larnt since I've thried

How a man can hould Heaven an' Hell in wan grip. Thin
most piteous she cried,
An' she snatched her two hands out o' mine to her troath, an'
seemed gaspin' for breath,
An' her head dhrooped aside, an' she lay in me arms like the
image o' death.

XIII.

But 'tis all in a mist afther thin. First the neighbours come
plutherin' round,
Callin' wan to the other that Nelly was dead, an' that Felix was
dhrowned.
An' the pólís thramped black thro' the glames av a moon that
was takin' to rise,
An' thin somebody said : " Sure he's murdered her sweetheart
before the girl's eyes."
Was it that set the win' howlin' " Murther !" all over the land in
the dark ?
An' they axed me a power o' questions, an' fitted me fut in a
mark
On the bank. But it's little I heeded whatever they'd do or
they'd say,
For thin Nelly was come to her sinses, an' ravin' an' moanin'
away,
An' kep biddin' thim hinder me dhrownin' the lad in the houle
nare the hill.
So sez I to meself whin I heard her : " I'll let thim belave
what they will.
I'll say naught, an' the kinder they'll thrate her belike." So I
just held me tongue.
An' some chaps began booin' an' shoutin' the villin'd a right to
be hung.
An' his mother wint callin' him soft, lettin' on he was hid for a
joke ;

But th' ould father I seen shake his fist at me over the heads o'
the folk :
Troth, as long as the life's in me body he'll ne'er git a minyit o'
paice.
And I seen Granny mopin' about wid the fright puckered up in
her face.
Och, she'll starve, now, the crathur, she'll starve ; that's the
throuble I'm lavin' behind.
Did I see? I'm scarce sartin, but since, I'll be seein' it oft in
me mind,
What they dhrew up all dhrippin', up out o' the wather that
shivered an' spun
In black rings, hauled up slow like a log, stiff an' stark, an' laid
down where the sun
Was just rachin' to twinkle the dew on the grass. Whin ye
looked where that lay,
All the world seemed no more than a drift o' deep night round
a hand's breadth o' day.
But it's clarer I see him come stepped thro' the sunset in
glimmers o' gould,
Than that wanst, sthretched his lenth there, stone-still, wid
thim black snaky weeds, wet an' could,
Thrailin' round him. Her darlint, her darlint—I hare that
asleep and awake ;
I'd a right to quit harin' it now, whin he'll listen no more than
she'll spake.

XIV.

For they tould me this day little Nelly had died o' the fever
last night,
An' the frettin' ; so nothin' that matthers a thraneen's left
undher the light.
What's the differ if people believe 'twas meself shoved him into
the pool ?

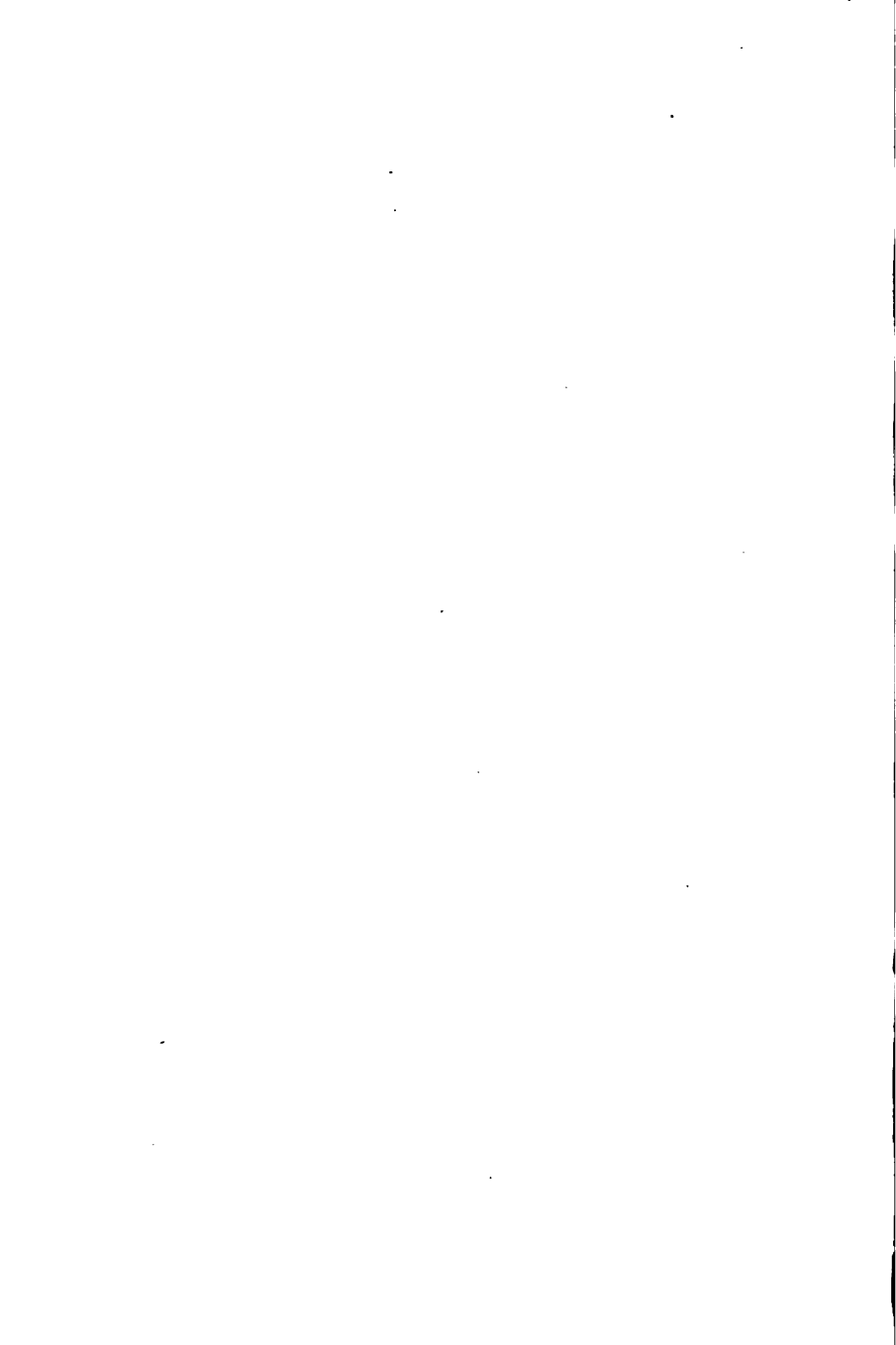
They can't help her or harm her. But, faith, sir, ye'll think me
a powerful fool,
Or ye'd scarce have the face to be biddin' me spake out the
truth now, afore
'Tis too late ; an' yerself sittin' there tellin' lies this last half
hour an' more,
Wid yer little black book full o' blatheremskyte as its leaves is
o' print ;
Sure, I'd heard all yer stories ; an' sorra a wan ye've the wit to
invint
That 'ill show folk the sinse o' the life where they've come, an'
the death where they'll go,
If there's sinse in't at all ; wan thing's sartin : it isn't the likes
o' yez know—
Wid yer chapels an' churches, Heaven stacked up in aich, an'
Hell's blazes all round.
Och, the Divil I keep is contint plaguin' crathurs that bide
above ground,
Widout bletherin' afther thim into the dark ; that's the Divil
for me ;
Tho' he wouldn't suit you, sir : the folk's aisier frighted wid
things they can't see.
But just leave me in paice wid yer glory an' joy—they're as
bad as the rest.
If there's anythin' manes me a good turn at all, let it give me
what's best—
The great sleep, that's all sleep, ne'er a fear wan could wake,
ne'er a thought to creep in ;
Ne'er a dhrame—or I'd maybe hare Nelly call Felix her
darlint agin.

PAST PRAYING FOR ;

OR,

THE SOUPER'S WIDOW.

“—Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans.”



PAST PRAYING FOR ;

OR,

THE SOUPER'S² WIDOW.

(A.D. 184—.)

I.

SURE he'd niver ha' done it, not he, if I'd on'y but held o' me
tongue ;
Och, the fool that I was, the blamed fool—for the same I'd
deserve to be hung ;
But, bedad thin, the tongue o' ye's harder than aught in the
world ilse to hould,
An' that mornin' we all was disthracted an' perished wid hunger
an' could.

II.

It was right in the worst o' the famine, the first yares the
praties wint black—
Tho' ye're scarce av an age, Sisther Frances, to remimber o'
things so far back ;

² *Souper* is a term applied to the few Irish Catholic peasants, who, during famine years, professed Protestantism in order to obtain the relief, often entrusted for distribution to the clergy of the then Established Church, who occasionally made a grant conditional upon attendance at their services, &c., though as a rule acting impartially and humanely.

But in coorse ye've heard tell o' thim times, whin the people
was dyin' be the score,
Ay, be hundrids an' thousands, the like was ne'er seen in the
counthry before.
An' what ilse should the crathurs ha' done, wid the food o' thim
rotted to dirt ?
Och, to see thim—ye'd meet ne'er a man but his face was as
white as his shirt.
And ourselves had been starved all the winther, the childher,
an' Micky, an' me,
An' poor Micky's ould mother, till, comin' on spring, not a
chanst could we see ;
For there wasn't a house far or nare where they'd give ye the
black o' yer eye,
And our Praste he was down wid the fever, an' clane ruined
forby.

III.

So it's rael delighted we were on that avenin' Pat Murphy
brought word
How the people o' Lunnon had sint some relaif to our town-
land he heard ;
Relaif—that was oatmale, an' loaves, an' a grand sup o' broth in
a bowl,
An' to git it ye'd stip down to Parson, who'd tuk to disthribit
the whoule.
So full arly we started next day, sin' the road's a long sthretch
to his place,
An' we hadn't a scrap in the house but a crust for the childher
a-paice ;
An' we brought an ould bag for the male, Mick an' I, while the
rist, lookin' on,
Did be wishin' we'd bring it ack full, an' a-wondhrin' how long
we'd be gone.

Sure, the laste o' thim all, little Larry, that scarce was a size to run sthraight,
Tuk a notion to come wid us too, whin he heard 'twas for some-
thin' to ait.

I remimber the look av it yit, skytin' afther us the lenth o' the lane.

Thin I mind, comin' into the town, meetin' cart-loads and
cart-loads o' grain,
That Lord Athmore was sindin' in sstrings to be shipped off
from Westport by say ;

An' the people stood watchin' thim pass like as if 'twas a corpse
on its way.

An' sez Mick, whin we met thim : " Look, Norah," sez he,
" that's not aisy to stand :

It's the lives av our childher th' ould naygur's a-cartin' off out
o' the land."

An' sez I, just to pacify Mick : " Thin good luck to the folks as
ha' sint

What 'ill keep o' the sowls in their bodies ; if we can but do
that I'm contint."

IV.

But, och, Sisther darlin', at Parson's we got sorra a bit afther
all ;

Not a taste in the world save the smill o' the soup that was
sthrong in the hall.

For whin Parson come out from his brickfast, he tould us he'd
got no relaif

'Xcipt for thim who wint reg'lar to church—where he niver had
seen us, that's safe—

An' he'd liefer throw bread to the dogs than to childher o'
papists, whose thricks

Were no better than haythins', brought up to be worshippin
ould bits o' sticks.

Howsome'er, if we'd give him our word we'd attind the next
Sunday, why thin
He'd considher. But who could ha' promised the like? Such a
shame and a sin :
Tarn a souper in sight o' thim all, an' throop off to the place
where they curse
The ould Pope, an' the Vargin, an' jeer at the Mass—why what
haythin'd do worse?
Yit that hape o' big loaves. Sister Frances, thim folk's in a
manner to blame,
Who know whin ye're starvin' an' tempt ye. So we wint back
the way that we came.
But, ochone, it seemed double the lenth, an' it's niver a word
Micky said,
An' the ould impty bag on me arm was that light it felt heavy
as lead ;
An' the childher, that ran out to meet us as far as the top o' the
hill,
Whin they found we'd brought nothin' at all—I could cry now
to think o' thim still.

V.

An' twyst after that Mick wint down there to thry if a bit
could be had,
But unless that we promised to tarn, not a scrapeen we'd git
good or bad.
Och, the long hungry days. So wan mornin' we'd ate all the
brickfast o'er night,
And I hoped we'd be late wakin' up, but it seemed cruel soon
gittin' light.
An' the March win' was ice, an' the sun on'y shinin' to show it
its road,
An' the fire was gone out on us black, an' no tarf till wan
thramped for a load.

Thin the childher an' Mick's mother herself, were that starvin',
the crathurs, an' could,
That they all fell to keenin' together most peetious, the young
an' the ould ;
Ontil Mick, that was lyin' in bed for the hunger, an' half the
week long
Had scarce tasted a bit, he laned up on his ilbow to ax what
was wrong.
An' sez I—God forgive me, 'twas just the first thing that come
into me head—
“Sure it's cryin' they are, man,” sez I, “for the want av a
mouthful o' bread,
And it's dyin' they may be next thing, for what help I can see.
Och, it's quare,
But if Parson had knowed how we're kilt, an' ye'd on'y ha'
spoken him fair,
He'd allow us a thrifle at laste.” An' sez he : “Woman,
whisht ! what's the use ?
I might spake him as fair as ye plase, or might give him the
heighth av abuse,
All as wan, he's that bitther agin us. But throth will I stand it
no more ;
I'll tarn souper this day for the male.” And he ups wid himself
off the floor ;
For 'twas Sunday that mornin', worse luck : “It's a sin, sure,”
sez he, “I know well,
'Siver, sooner than watch thim disthroyed, I'd say prayers to the
Divil in Hell,”
Sez he, goodness forgive him—but, mind you, meselfs ivery
ha'porth as bad,
For thin, watchin' him off down the lane, I dunno was I sorry
or glad.

VI.

And he wint, sure enough, to the church. Widdy Mahon she
tould me next day
How she'd gone there herself for the victuals, an' met wid him
comin' away ;
And how afther the sarvice they stipped up to Parson's to thry
what they'd git,
An' they got a half loaf, an' the full o' the male-bag ; an' niver
a bit
Would he touch, but made off wid him sthraight, tho' she said
he seemed hard-set to crawl—
Och, ye see 'twas for us that he tarned, for himself he'd ne'er do
it at all.
An' it's wishful he was to slip home in a hurry, poor lad, wid his
pack,
An' to bring us the best that he had. But och, Sisther, he niver
got back.

VII.

For the boys comin' up from the Mass down at Moyna, a
while later on,
Found him dhropped av a hape be the path past Kilogue wid
the life av him gone ;
An' th' ould male-bag gripped close in his hand, that he thought
to ha' carried us home.
Och, I mind it, the place where he lay, 'tis the lonesomest road
ye can roam,
Wid the bog black an' dhrary around ye, an' sorra a wall or a
hedge,
Sthretchin' out till the hill-top lifts up like a fearful great face
o'er the edge ;
An' the breadths o' the big impty sky, wid no ind, look as far
as ye will,
Seem just dhrawin' an' dhrainin' yer life out, if weak-like ye're
feelin' an' ill ;

An' it's that way poor Mick was. Och, Sisther, there's scarcely
a day's gone by
In the years iver since, but I'm thinkin' how disolit he happint
to die,
And I dhrame it o' nights—be himself, starin' lonesome an'
lost 'nathe thim skies,
Wid the could creepin' into his heart, an' the cloud comin' over
his eyes,
An' that sin on his sowl—would ye say there's a chanst for
him? Look, now, at me,
Wid a bed to die aisy on here in the House, bettther off, sure,
than he,
An' me fau't just as bad. Cock me up! to lie here where I've
help widin call,
An' poor Mick out o' rache on the road—where's the manin'
or sinse in't at all?

VIII.

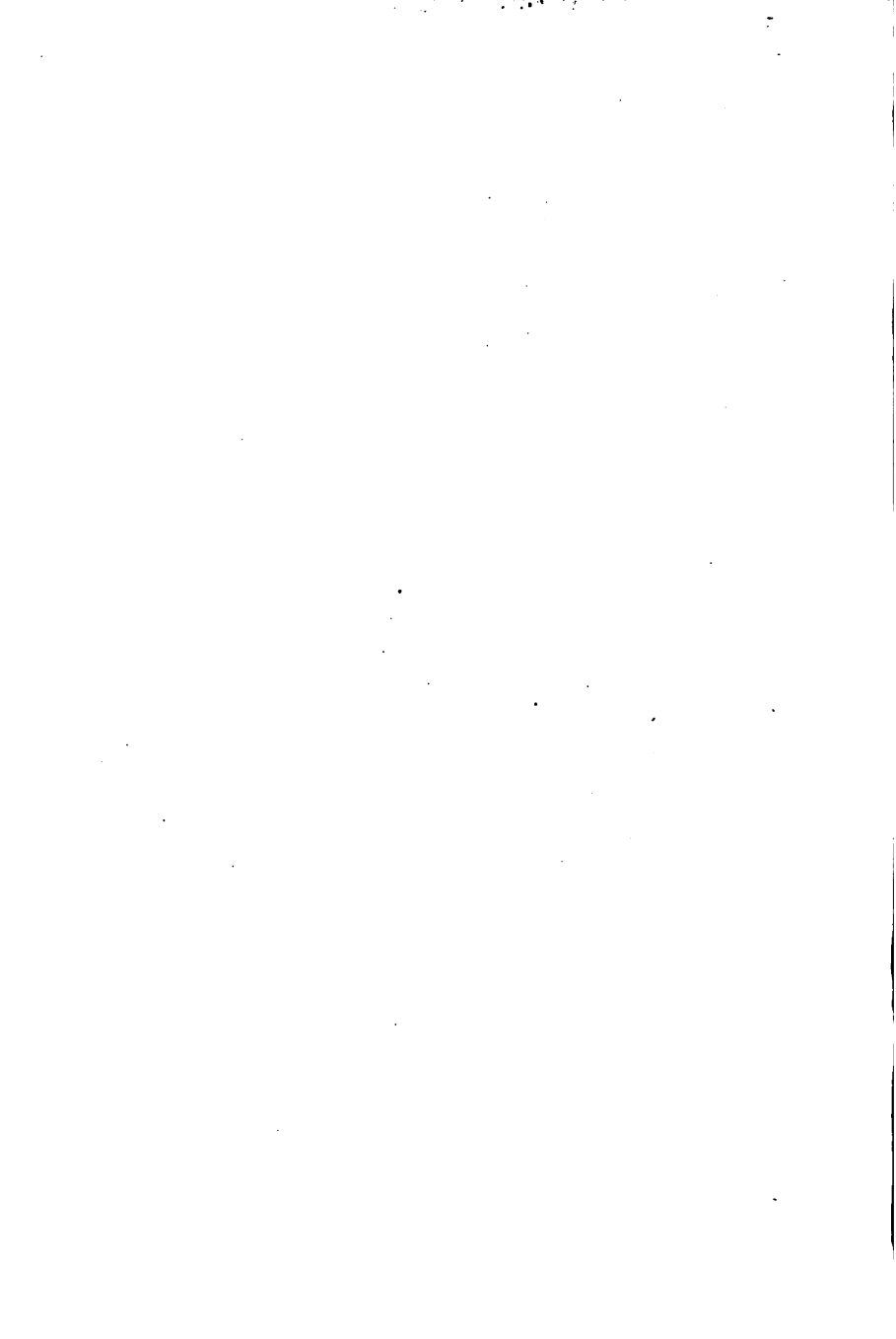
Aye, in troth, 'twas no thing to go do; aye, a scandal it was
and a sin;
But mayhap they'd scarce jidge him so hard if they knew all
the sthraits we were in.
There's the Mother o' Marcy, sez I to meself, sure, it's childher
she's had—
May they ne'er want the bite or the sup, if she'll spake a good
ward for me lad—
Och, me head's gittin' doitered an' quare, or I'd know they've
tuk off out o' this,
And is settled in glory above, where there's nought can befall
them amiss—
But suppose she remimbers her time down below, if 'twas even
a yare
Whin the blight hadn't come on their praties an' druv the whoule
land to despair,

Yit I'm thinkin' there's always been plinty o' trouble about on
this arth,
An' for sure 'twill ha' happint her whiles to ha' niver a sod on
the harth,
Or a scrap for the pot, an' the childher around her all famished
an' white,
An' they cryin', an' she nothin' to give them, save bid them to
whisht an' be quite.

IX.

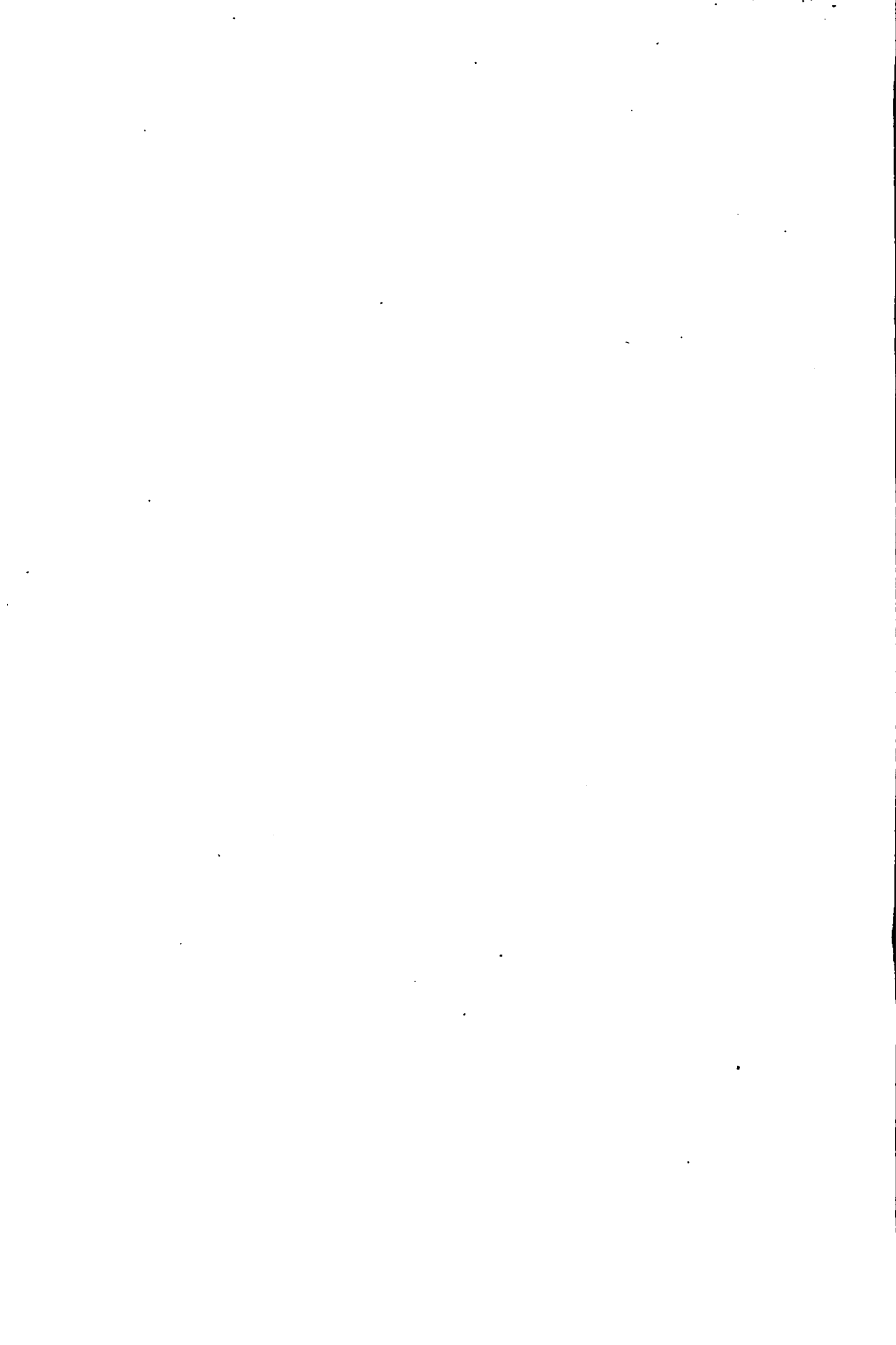
But, indade, for that matther, the Lord, who'd enough to con-
tind wid those times,
Might ha' some sort o' notion himself how the poor people's
timpted to crimes,
Whin they're watchin' their own folk a-starvin', an' no help for
it, strive as they may.
For himself set a dale by his mother, accordin' as I've heard say,
An' remimbered her last thing av all in the thick of his trouble,
an' thought
To make sure she'd ha' some wan to care her an' heed that she
wanted for nought,
An' be keepin' the roof o'er her head while she lived, all the
same as her son—
But, ye see, he'd a frind he could trust to, an' Micky, the crathur,
had none.
An' that same would be vexin' his heart while he lay dyin'
there on the road ;
For the nary a sowl would be left in the world to purtect us, he
knowed ;
An' I mind when the fever he had, an' was wandh'rin' a bit in
his head,
He kep' ravin' continyal as how 'twas desthroyed we'd be wanst
he was dead.

An' poor Mick was that kind in his heart, he'd be putt past his
patience outright
Whin th' ould mother an' childher was frettin' wid hunger from
mornin' till night ;
An' it's that was the raison he done it—nought ilse. So, belike,
if above
They'd considher the hardships he met, till it's disprit, bedad,
he was dhruv,
An' no hope o' relaif for the crathurs at home, mind you, barrin'
he wint.
An' let on a bit now an' agin—they'd belaiue 'twas no harm
that he mint ;
An' that wan sin he done, an' he starvin', they'd maybe forgive
an forgit—
Och, Sisther Frances, me honey, would ye say there's a chanst
for him yit ?



MISS HONOR'S WEDDING.

“Οἷόν μ' ἀκούσαντ' ἀρτίως ἔχει, γύναι,
Ψυχῆς πλάνημα κάνακίνησις φρενῶν.”



MISS HONOR'S WEDDING.

I.

OULD Sir Maurice's youngest daughther, do I mind her, Sir,
did ye say?
Miss Honor is it? Och, sure the same as I'd seen her but yisther-
day;
And her weddin'—Ay, Sir, her weddin' I said. How long since?
Well, I dunnó,
But a matter o' ten yare back belike; anyway 'tis wan while
ago.

II.

We thought little enough o' the match here below in the town;
people said
Miss Honor'd a right to ha' looked at home, if so be she'd a
mind to wed.
There was plinty o' bettther than he did be after her thin, ye'll
be bound,
An' she reckoned the greatest beauty in the sivin counties
around.
Yit she needs must take up wid a sthranger; I b'laive 'twas
from Scotland he came.
No, Sir, I ne'er chanced to behould him, and I disremimber his
name—

A big man, I've heard tell, as yerself's, Sir, an' plisint o' speech,
but a bit
Conthráry some whiles in his timper, an' come av a quare wild
sit.
Not aquil no ways to Miss Honor : sure, whin she'd be ridin'
the road,
As many's the time I've seen her, be the look av her no wan'd
ha' knowed
Whether 'twas to the Arl, or the Countess, or ould Andy the
fiddler she bowed ;
A rael lady, tho', mind ye, some Quality thought her proud.

III.

Howsomiver, a sthranger or no, ould Sir Maurice was plased
an' contint,
An' they settled to have a great weddin' down here at the
indin' o' Lint ;
An' I mind the white sloe-flower was meltin' from off the black
hedges like hail
In the sunshine, whin back to the Castle the family came wid a
dale
O' grand company, frinds an' relations ; the house was as full
as a fair.
But, a couple o' days to the weddin', Kate Doyle, that's in ser-
vice up there,
She run in wid a message to say they'd a kitchen-maid tuk to
her bed
Wid the awfulest toothache at all, an' her cheek swelled the
size av her head ;
An' they wanted a girl be the week, an' she'd spoke to the
misthress for me—
So I slipped up that night after supper, as proud o' me luck as
could be.

IV.

Thin next day, whin they'd gone to the dinner, Kate showed
me the grandeur they'd got
Settled out in the library : all av her prisints, a terrible lot.
Sure, I couldn't be tellin' ye half, let alone nare the whole o'
the things.
There was wan o' the tables was covered wid bracerlits, an'
brooches, an' rings ;
An' the big silver plates did be shinin' like so many moons thro'
the mist ;
An' the joogs wid their insides pure gould, an' the taypots, an'
arns, an' the rist.
But the iligant chayney—och saints ! the wee cups wid their
handles all gilt,
An' their paintin's o' flower-wrathes an' birds—if ye'd break
wan, bedad, ye'd be kilt.
An' the jools, och, the jools was that purty, I'd ha' sted there
star-gazin' all night ;
There was diaminds like raindhrops that aich had a fire-sparkle
somehow alight,
An' the pearls like as if they'd been stringin' the bits o' round
hailstones for beads,
An' the red wans an' green, if a rainbow was sowin' ye'd take
thim for seeds ;
An' the grand little boxes to hould thim, all lined wid smooth
satin below—
“Sure, it's well to be her, Kate,” sez I, an' sez she, “Och, begorra,
that's so.”

V.

Well, the morn, be the bist o' good luck, Kate an' I got the
chanst to slip out,
An' away wid us off to the church, where the folk was all standin'
about,

Tho' it wanted an hour to the time ; an' we squazed to a sate
at the door,
That was thrailed round most tasty wid wrathes that they'd
put up the evenin' before.
An' it's there we'd the greatest divarsion behouldin', for afther
a while,
All the guests was arrivin' an' roostlin' in vilvits an' silks up the
aisle,
Iviry wan lookin' finer than t'other, wid sthramers, an' fithers an
lace—
But the sorra a sign o' the bridegroom was seen comin' nigh to
the place.
That was sthrange now ; an' folk did be sayin' they wondhered
what kep' him, an' thin
It seemed Quality's selves got onaisy, for ye'd see the grand
bonnits begin
Niddle-noddin' together to whusper ; an' wan o' the gintlemen'd
quit,
Slippin' out be the little side-door, an' look down the sthraight
road for a bit,
An' come back, blinkin' out o' the sun, wid a head-shake, for
nothin' he'd spied ;
Till at last, in the heighth o' their throuble, in landed Miss
Honor—the bride.

VI.

Och, an' she was a bride ! Not a sowl but was wishin' good
luck to her groom.
All in white, like a branch o' wild pear, when ye scarce see the
stem for the bloom,
An' her dark hair just glintin' wid glames, like the bird's wing
that sthrakes off the dew—
Och, a beauty complate, from the crown av her head to the point
av her shoe.

Wid her hand on Sir Maurice's arm, an' he lookin' as proud as
ye plase,
An' eight iligant bridesmaids behind her, aich pair dhressed as
like as two pase,
Wid their booquees o' flowers like big stars in a thrimble o' farn
laves ; ye'd say
Be the scint they'd dhropped sthraight out av Hiven ; I
remimber the smell to this day.

VII.

But, next minyit, in afther thim stepped a sthrange gintleman
none av us knew,
In a terrible takin', an' pantin' as if 'twas a bellers he blew ;
Wid a yallerish slip in his hand o' the sort they've for messages
tuk
Off the tiligrumph wires, an' he ups to where Quality stared at
him, sthruck
Av a heap like ; and somethin' he sez, that I couldn't exactly
hare,
But a somethin' the others weren't wishful Miss Honor should
guess, that was clare,
For they all wint hush-hushin' ; howiver, I'm thinkin' she heard
what he said,
And I saw her take hould o' the paper, an' whatever was in it
she read.

VIII.

I misdoubt what's the thruth o' the story. Some said all the
while he'd a wife
In the States unbeknownst, that was somehow found out, so
he'd run for his life ;
An' some said he was coortin' a Marquis's daughther in England
instead ;
But some said it was nought on'y just a fantisue he'd tuk into his
head.

But whativer the raison might be, an' whativer had happint
amiss,
The ind av it was, he was niver set eyes on from that day to
this.

IX.

Sure now, Quality's quare in their ways ; when me cousin ran
off to inlist,
Troth, the bawls av his mother an' sisthers were fit to ha'
fright'ed the bist ;
An' last winther whin Norah Macabe had heard tell that her
sweetheart was dhrowned,
It's her scrames 'ud ha' tirrified nations—ye'd hare thim a good
mile o' ground.
But Miss Honor, as still and as quiet she turned back be the
way that she came,
Down the aisle, past the pews wid the people set starin' in rows
just the same ;
An' right out to the shine o' the sun, that should never ha' lit
on her head
Till she walked wid a ring on her hand, an' the girls sthrewin'
flowers where she'd thread.
So she passed thro' the yard, where the folk all kep' whisht as
the dead in their graves,
Not a sound in the warld save the flutter o' win' thro' the iver-
green laves,
An' a lark somewhere singin' like wild up above in the clare
light alone ;
Till the carriage dhruv off from the gate, an' we heard the
wheels grate on the stone.
Thin ould Molly O'Rourke, that stood by wid her head in her
raggety cloak :
“ Now, the Saints may purtect her,” sez she, “ for the heart of
the crathur is broke.”

X.

An' sure maybe ould Molly was right ; I dunnó, for they tuk
her away,
To disthract av her mind, so they said, to some counthries far
over the say ;
Some most quarious onnathural place, where I'm tould the sun's
scorchin' an' hot
All the yare, an' the people is mostly ould naygurs as black as
the pot,
An' a sthrame thro' it full o' thim bastes o' great riptiles that
swally ye whole,
Wid the disolit diserts around, where ye'll see ne'er the sight
av a sowl ;
Warser land than the blackest o' bogs, just as bare as the palm
o' yer hand,
Savin' whiles barbarocious big imiges stuck in the midst o' the
sand,
An' gazabos o' stones stuffed wid bones of the hayjus ould
haythins inside—
Ay, in Aygypt—belike that's the name. But, at all ivints, there
she died.

XI.

Yes, she died, Sir ; an' there she was buried, she niver set fut
here agin ;
An' it's nought but the truth that her like I've not looked on
afore her or sin'.
An' bad luck, thin, to thim that 'ud harm her. A pity—a pity,
bedad,
If ye come to considher the plisure in life she'd a right to ha'
had.
'Tis the same as a rose-bud that's torn whin its red's just the
brightest to see ;

Or a linnet shot dead twitterin' soft be its bit av a nest in the tree—

So, in spring, whin the hedges is greenin', an' cuckoos beginnin' to call,

Poor Miss Honor I mind, an' her weddin', that was niver a weddin' at all.



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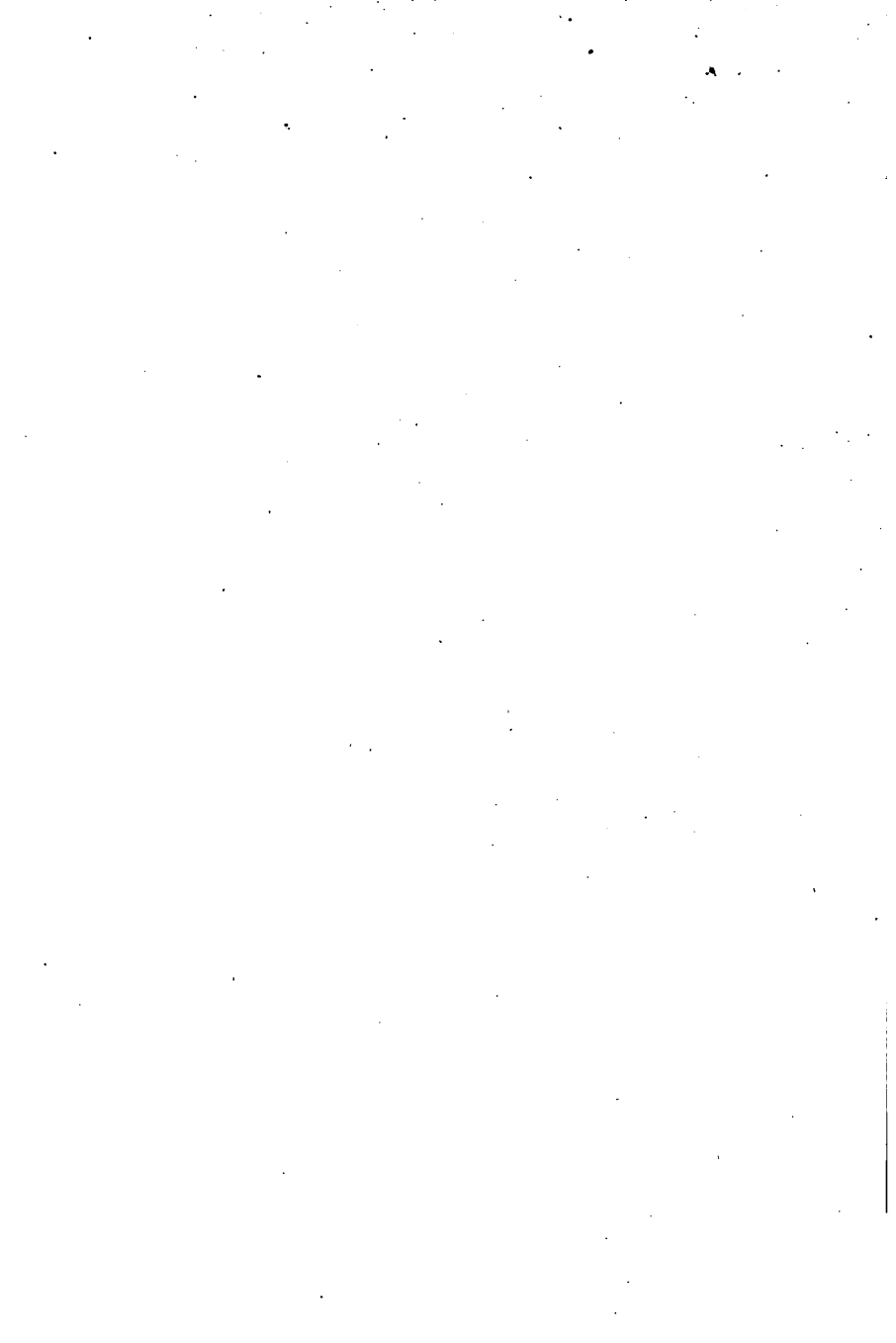
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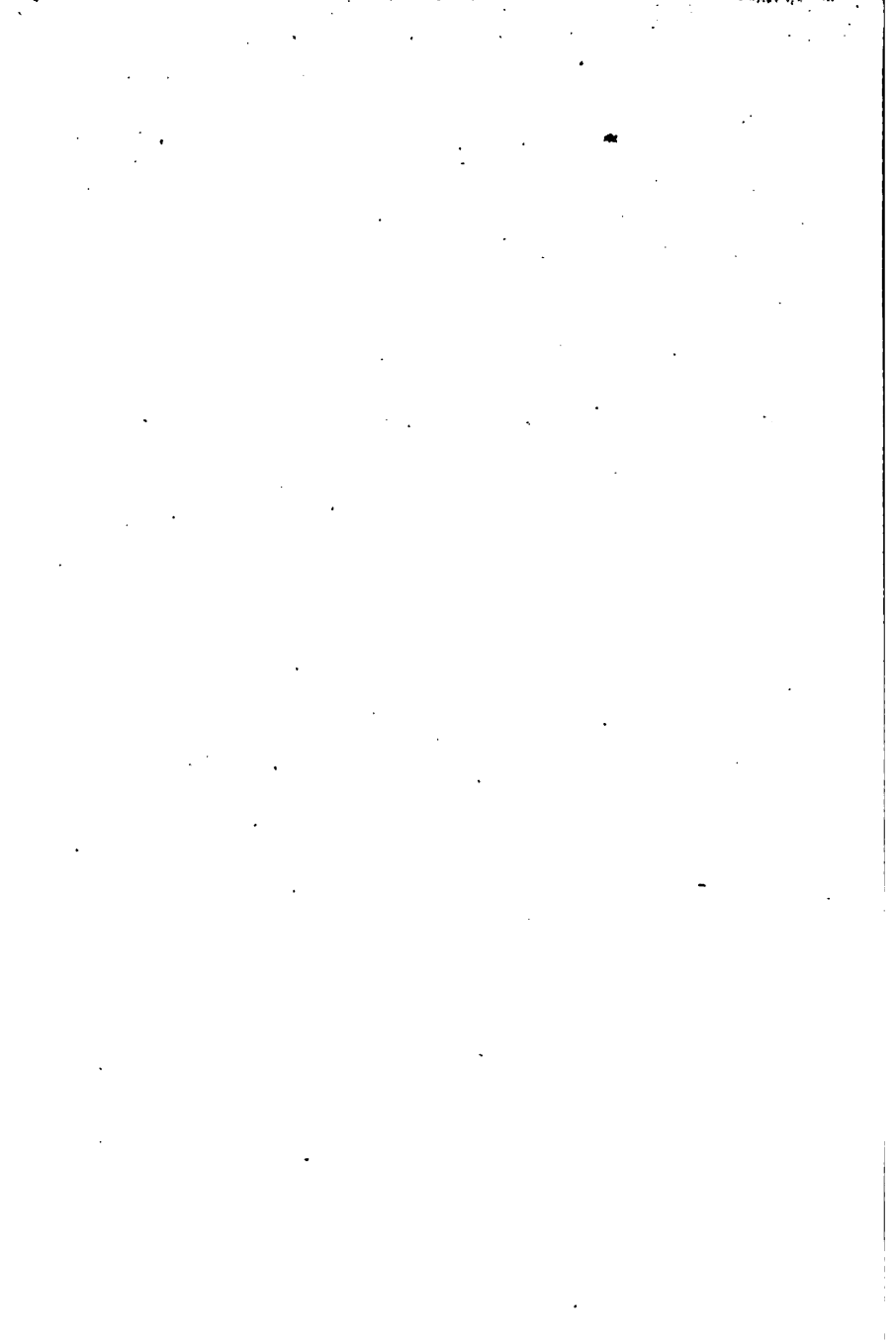
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